

On Farm Milk Quality Workshops Pay Dividends

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Economic Impact: Milk Quality Workshops

- Thirteen educational on farm, interactive milk quality workshops were conducted across Iowa.
- 243 dairy producers and 57 industry partners attended
- 227 post workshop evaluations were completed.
- 99% said they received 2-5 key take home important messages and considered implementation.
- 96+% of participants stated they would make changes or actions as a result of the workshop.
- Herds increased production 575 lbs./cow/year or \$20,585/ herd increased milk income.
- Herds decreased somatic cell counts from 329,000 to 133,000, resulting in \$20,376/ herd increased income due to higher milk quality premiums.
- Overall, herds attending the milk quality workshops increased average herd annual income \$40,961 or \$229/cow.
- During the same year these herds were monitored and evaluated (2011), all DRMS herds (DHIA; 15,000+ herds) saw a decrease in milk production of 169 pounds (mostly attributed to summer heat stress) or -\$5,103 milk income with minimal SCC reductions.

Introduction and Objective

Producing the highest quality milk and dairy products ensures consumer confidence as well as enhances farm profitability through higher milk production and premium bonuses. Somatic cells or white blood cells are routinely measured in milk (individual cows and bulk tank) as a measure of quality (lower SCC = higher quality). Recent EU requirements of not exceeding 400,000 cells/ ml as an individual producer if milk ends up as part of any EU export product led both producers and industry partners to express concerns as well as an interest in educational venues and workshops to address key areas in dairy management, somatic cell and mastitis control, dairy product quality, farm and industry profitability, even for producers far below the EU limits (average SCC in Iowa is 233,000 cells/ml). The objective was to create a series of jointly sponsored and conducted milk quality on-farm interactive workshops to address key milk quality areas and enhance farm profitability

ISUEO Programmatic Response

Thirteen educational on farm milk quality workshops were conducted across Iowa with a focus on learning and adoption of skills to assess milk quality parameters and herd dynamics, address focal prevention areas related to lactating cow health and performance, dry and fresh cow mastitis management and stewardship, milking practices, and decision making processes in dealing with problem animals and/or herds. Initial needs assessments of producers were conducted by the ISUEO dairy team and dairy industry partners (milk processors and veterinarians), with subsequent development of 5 hands-on, interactive, on-farm modules addressing these areas. Modules were developed by ISU dairy team specialists, and were jointly taught with industry partners.

Workshop Results and Economic Impact

- 243 dairy producers and 57 industry partners attended with 227 post workshop evaluations completed.
- 99% said they received 2-5 key take home important messages and considered implementation.
- 96+% of participants stated they would make changes or actions as a result of the workshop.
- A one year post meeting evaluation of DHIA records (milk production & milk quality) were evaluated for 40 attendees and compared to all DHI DRMS Holstein and all herds (11,760 and 14,052 herds respectively).
 - Participants averaged 179 cows/ herd and improved milk production 575 lbs./ cow /year for an increased milk income of \$20,585 / herd (\$20/cwt milk) or \$823,400 across all herds.
 - Initial herd weighted somatic cells counts averaged 329,000 cells ml, 196,000 cell/ml at 6 mo post workshop and 133,000 cells/ ml 1 year post workshop. A milk quality premium of \$0.50/ 100 lbs milk was associated with an increased income of \$815,040 or \$20,376/ herd/ year.
 - Total increased revenues for all 40 herds were \$1,638,440. This is \$40,961/herd or \$229/cow.
 - In contrast, all DRMS herds dropped 169 lbs milk/ cow/ year or -\$5103/ herd with minimal SCC drop.

Overall Summary

Thirteen educational on farm milk quality workshops were conducted across Iowa with a focus on learning and adoption of skills to assess and manage milk quality parameters and herd dynamics. Workshops resulted in learning, behavioral, and economic changes and impacts. Overall, herds attending the milk quality workshops increased average herd annual income \$40,961 or \$229/cow with 50% increased income due to higher milk production and 50% due to increased milk quality and premium payments associated with higher quality.