Measurement to Management-Recording Heifer Weights

Operation Managers Conference
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AMR- What makes us special?

The Team-
117 years of experience at Dairy One!

TEAM
• Variety of backgrounds
  • 6 with herdsman experience
  • 3 former Market Managers
  • 2 with nutrition background
  • 2 former field technicians
  • 3 with prior networking skills
  • 1 with vet degree
• Spread across the northeast- NH, VT, PA, Western NY, and Ithaca
• All with a passion for helping farms succeed
Variety of Services

- Dairy Comp/DCCON/Scout Support
  - Pocket Cowcard, Clients, Shadows, Milk/Heat interfaces
- PCDART Support
  - Pocket Dairy, Milk/Heat interfaces
- Computer installation
  - New sales, reinstallation, troubleshooting
- Network Installation
  - Point to point networks, long-distance networks to share internet
  - Camera systems, remote viewing, recording, alert systems
- Weather Stations
  - Rain data storage for CAFO
- Fields and Crops Support
  - Manure worksheets, weather station interfaces
- Tag/EID sales
  - Matched tag sets, EID tags- premise and manufacture tags

Monitoring Heifer Programs

What are the steps?

- Record the Basics
- Review Records
- Add in Weights and Heights
- Review Records

Recording the Basics

- Health Events- PNEU, Scours, Others?
  - Setup treatment protocols
    - record beef and milk withhold dates
    - Compliance with treatments
  - Protocols also allow for better analysis because of the consistent data entry
  - Poor doing adult animals could have been treated multiple times as calves
  - Morbidity rates
Recording the Basics - continued

- Death and Sales
  - Accurate inventories
  - Non completion rates
    - Higher rates of loss at certain ages?
  - New CAR codes for dairy sales, still need to be recorded as left herd

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Weighing Heifers

- Monitor changes in a heifer program
  - There is a cost to not growing heifers correctly, are we getting the results we need?
  - Choose an age at first calving and that is when the animal needs to be 82% of mature
- When do we weigh? Typically we need several points to evaluate
  - Birth Weights
  - Weaning Weights
  - 4 months of age- are we still on track? There is time to correct
  - Breeding Weights- 55% of adult weight
  - 3 months into pregnancy
  - 6-7 months into pregnancy- are we going to hit 82% of mature weight?
  - Mature weight- 3rd and 4th lactation animals, not at dry/calving
    - 3rd lactation animals are 96% of a 4th lactation/mature animal

Why do we want bigger heifers?

- Higher lifetime milk production for heifers that meet weight goals
  - There is a correlation between percent of mature weight and percent of mature milk production
  - A heifer that is 82% of mature weight will make 82% of mature milk
  - A heifer that is 75% of mature weight will make 75% of mature milk
  - Resources will go to growth first, sacrifice milk if you don’t hit target
- More reserves during times of stress/illness
- Quicker entry into milking herd but need to meet goals
Weighing Heifers - Requirements

- Scale Indicator
- Platform
- Weigh bars
- RFID Wand (optional)
- Gates/Shoot
- Employee buy in
  - Weighing event - a day once a month to weigh instead of tying to other jobs
  - Weigh a random sampling of heifers - if sample is good, chances are group is doing ok

Scale Pricing - Current as of 12.31.16, subject to change

- Indicator - $1875
- Load Bars - $1050

Pricing - Continued

- Platform - $550
- Optional - RFID Wand - $1550
- RFID Tags - 500-1000 $2.01/tag
What are the steps?

• Record the Basics
• Review Records
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Review Results Timely

- What are you going to do?
  - Low amount of animals below target, cull?
  - High amounts below goals, why??
- How- GUIDE!

Demo Time!