by Norman Jordan, Jr., NCDPA President

The thirteenth annual meeting of the North Carolina Dairy Producers Association was held on the evening of January 22, 2008. The President’s report covered four major areas of importance to the state’s dairy farmers.

The NC Dairy Security Committee continues its work on the Business Continuity concept. The objective of the committee is to convince USDA that the dairy industry can develop protocols that will allow milk in unaffected areas to be moved to market when there is a foreign animal disease outbreak somewhere in the country. This will help reduce the number of dairies that would otherwise face bankruptcy while helping to supply the public with milk.

On May 22, 2007 at a public hearing for Federal Orders 5, 6, and 7, the Southern Producers Steering Committee, of which NCDPA is a member, submitted testimony. The Committee then filed a legal brief in support of DCMA’s proposal while encouraging the Secretary of Agriculture to consider making changes that would be more beneficial to the producers that are located within the orders.

The formation of a national organization AFACT (American Farmers for the Advancement and Conservation of Technology) was noted. Dairy farmers should be concerned that accepted production practices will come under increasing scrutiny by a public that is uninformed about modern dairy farming practices. Ultimately the consumer will suffer if milk production decreases or becomes more expensive. This may lead to higher retail prices during a slow down in the nation’s economy. The dairy industry needs to do more to enhance the public’s knowledge about the modern dairy farmer and the role that we have in providing for our cows’ well being and comfort.

A brief update was given on Dairy Advantage, North Carolina’s dairy industry stabilization and growth program strategic plan. Achieving the goals of Dairy Advantage will have an impact on dairy farm retention, dairy farm expansion, and relocation and recruitment of new dairy farms. NCDPA is proud to have had the opportunity to be a part of the creation of Dairy Advantage.
The North Carolina Dairy Producers Association will continue to work to ensure the future presence of profitable and viable dairy farms in NC. I encourage you to take advantage of Dairy Advantage. A condensed description of the program is presented below.

**Dairy Advantage** - North Carolina, Where Opportunity Abounds!

*Dairy Advantage* ---- *Is a program designed to help stabilize and grow the NC dairy industry.*

*Dairy Advantage* ---- *Was developed by a committee representing the dairy industry of the state – milk producers, milk processors, allied dairy businesses, farm organizations, North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services, and North Carolina State University Extension Specialists.*

*Dairy Advantage* ---- *Has the goals of:*  
- enhancing the value of milk and dairy products produced in the state  
- enhancing dairy farm family quality of life  
- increasing the volume of milk produced in the state  
- supporting dairy farm numbers in the state

*Dairy Advantage* ---- *Committee members studied existing dairy assistance programs in other states, with the focus put on programs that could help existing dairies stay in operation, help existing dairies that want to expand, and help existing or new dairies that want to relocate within or move into the state.*

*Dairy Advantage* ---- *Key Action Items are:*  
- Develop a farm assessment program for existing producers to help them identify strengths and weaknesses. (This program has been initiated.)  
- Develop a dairy profit team program to help producers improve the long-term viability of their dairy farms. (This program has been initiated.)  
- Establish a recruitment and relocation assistance program for individuals interested in establishing dairies in North Carolina.  
- Establish a Dairy Development Coordinator position to assist with the development of the North Carolina dairy industry.  
- Encourage and assist NCDA & CS to create staff responsibilities specifically in Dairy Agribusiness.  
- Encourage and assist NC Cooperative Extension Service to maintain two Area Specialized Dairy Agents, and to convert these positions to be fully state funded.  
- Encourage and assist NCSU College of Agriculture and Life Sciences to maintain an effective dairy extension program in production, management, and economics.  
- Establish a legal organization for the purpose of finding additional resources to accomplish the goals of Dairy Advantage. (This has been accomplished.)

*Dairy Advantage* ---- *Will have an Oversight Committee composed of dairy industry representatives to monitor and manage the programs and activities of this initiative.*

**Dairy Advantage Program Contacts:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NCDA &amp; CS</th>
<th>NC Farm Bureau</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scott Bissette</td>
<td>Chester Lowder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1020 Mail Service Center</td>
<td>P.O. Box 27766</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raleigh, NC  27699-1020</td>
<td>Raleigh, NC  27611</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(919) 733-7136, ext. 257</td>
<td>(919) 788-1076</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:scott.bissett@ncmail.net">scott.bissett@ncmail.net</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:chester.lowder@ncfb.org">chester.lowder@ncfb.org</a></td>
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As President of the NCDPA, I encourage you to support and join your state’s dairy association. The annual membership fee for both active dairy producers and associate members is only $50. To join the NCDPA simply mail check payable to NCDPA along with your name, address, phone number and county to NCDPA, 2228 North Main Street, Fuquay Varina, NC 27526. We need all dairy producers and dairy industry folks in the state to become members of the association so we can have the power of numbers and be a unified industry behind the organization’s actions.

Awards Presented at the 2008 Annual NC Dairy Conference

Quality Milk Producer Awards:
At the 2008 North Carolina Dairy Conference held on January 22-23, the NCDPA presented their annual Quality Milk Producer awards. These awards are given yearly to the producers who have consistently produced milk with the lowest average somatic cell and bacteria counts throughout the previous year. The top three recipients in the three herd size groups for 2007 were: for herds with less than 100 cows – Neal Grose, Wayne Stout, and Greg Langley; for herds with 100-250 cows – Triple R Dairy, Neal Johnson, and Ladd Dairy; for herds with over 250 cows – Myers Farms, Inc., Dean Ross, and Tap Root Dairy. All these producers had yearly average somatic cell counts under 200,000 and bacteria counts under 5,000. Congratulations!

Outstanding Dairy Producer Award:
Also at the conference the NCSU Department of Animal Science presented the 2008 Marvin Senger outstanding dairy producer award to Leigh Lane of Stepstone Holsteins in Caswell County. This award recognizes producers who have exhibited outstanding leadership in dairy, farm and community organizations at the local, area, state, regional and national levels; exhibited leadership in business and production management practices used; and leadership in the use of modern technology.

An edited description of Leigh’s accomplishments as originally prepared by Marti Day, Area Specialized Dairy Extension Agent, follows. After graduating from Rutgers University in 1973 and making Debbie his wife, Leigh went to work on a 100 cow dairy owned by Bill Petit in Pemberton NJ. Leigh was looking for an opportunity to begin building a herd of his own and answered Ben Lloyd’s help-wanted ad in the Lancaster Farming newspaper. After a visit to the area, they made the decision to move south. In his own words, Leigh says it was the best move he ever made. He managed the cow herd for Ben Lloyd in Orange County for 7 ½ years, building up cows for the eventual move to his own farm. Brown Robinson – long time faithful friend and employee of Ben Lloyd’s – once said he never knew anyone as devoted to a cow as Leigh Lane.
In 1985, Leigh and Debbie leased a farm in Caswell County just a few miles down the road from where they would eventually settle and buy land. They milked 60 cows at the rented farm with all family labor. Considering that the family consisted of 8 year old Adam and 6 year old Sarah, Leigh and Debbie had plenty to do. They contracted with the owner of the farm to grow their silage and spent their energy managing cows.

In 1987, their youngest son Charles was born, and in 1990 they bought the farm they currently own on County Home Road, expanding to 100 cows and one hired hand. At every turn, with each move, friends, family and neighbors pitched in to help. The members of the Central Carolina Holstein Association were ready and willing with each move to haul cows and help get the family settled in. The 100 year old farm house was a project in itself. Dairy facilities were upgraded with a covered feed area and ventilation for existing motel-style free stalls. Even visiting family from Pennsylvania and New Jersey were given the opportunity to enjoy farm life…..the putting up and taking down of shade cloth over the holding lot became Easter and Thanksgiving traditions!!

In 2001, the Lane’s made major improvements to their farm by building a 158 stall barn in the most unique and well-planned way to minimize stress and disruption – at least for the cows! The half of the barn farthest from the parlor was constructed first while leaving the existing free stalls and feed alley undisturbed. When the first section of the barn was complete, the cows were moved in and the second half of the barn was built where the original housing had stood. When the barn was complete the cows hardly knew there’d been a change! The only problem being, just like any major project, things moved at a slightly slower pace than anticipated and the heifers purchased to fill up the new barn started calving before the barn was quite ready….Leigh can laugh - now - at the lack of respect those first calf heifers had for the polytape he used to move them from the new half of the barn to the parlor! The barn now houses the Lane’s herd of 170 registered Holsteins.

Just like on all dairies, the whole family has been involved in some aspect of the day to day work and fun on the farm. Currently Adam is serving his county in Iraq, Sarah is a producer with CNN in New York city, and Charles is studying athletic training at ECU. Adam is interested in returning to the dairy business when his enlistment time is up.

Debbie is in charge of calf-raising, in addition to teaching high school math. She was ready for an upgrade in the calf facilities, so they had to decide between building new hutches or a totally new system. That was an easy decision for the person who feeds calves in all the variations of bad weather we seem to be blessed with. The new greenhouse style calf barn not only keeps the calves dry and clean, it keeps the calf feeder out of the weather, too! Each calf is given a gallon of colostrum at birth and raised on the accelerated growth feed program with a 28/20 milk replacer. Upon weaning at eight weeks, the calves are given free-choice a cottonseed hull based ration from weaning until breeding. First calf heifers consistently freshen at 22 to 23 months of age.

Leigh is an innovator in many ways. The wastes are applied to pastures and cropland with an irrigation gun and a honeywagon  Leigh contracts with his neighbor to grow and put up his silage, again, allowing his energy to go to the cows. Five commodity bays hold the remaining ingredients for the milking herd rations, formulated by Dr. Karen Jordan. Dr. Jordan also does the essential veterinary work for the herd.

Besides being an outstanding dairyman, Leigh is a strong contributor to his community and to the NC dairy industry. Leigh serves in many roles at his local church. His contributions to the dairy industry include serving as a director for the North Carolina Dairy Producers Association, serving on the strategic planning committee that has developed the Dairy Advantage program, serving on the board for the Central Carolina Holstein Association, and serving as President of the Orange Dairy Herd Improvement Association. Leigh also serves as a director for the State Holstein Association and Debbie is currently serving as Secretary. Leigh is the immediate past chairman and a director for the
NC Dairy Foundation, he is on the board and is VP for Select Sire Power, he serves as a director for the Caswell County Farm Bureau, and is Chairman of the Dairy Advisory Committee for the NC Farm Bureau. Leigh also served on the state Johnnes Committee, and has been testing his herd since the beginning of the program. The farm is enrolled in the Voluntary Ag District.

Looking at the history and achievements of Stepstone Holsteins, its obvious there is a well thought-out plan and lot of hard work that goes into making the dairy the successful business it is today. An artful melding of tried and true methods with the latest innovations in technology sprinkled with sound financial management makes all aspects of the business come together. Congratulations, Leigh!

NCDPA Distinguished Service Award:
At the 2008 annual meeting of the NCDPA, Norman Jordan, Jr., president., presented the association’s distinguished service award to Dr. Donald E. Pritchard, Extension Dairy Specialist in the Department of Animal Science at NCSU. The award is presented to individuals who have supported the NCDPA and its efforts, but also recognizes the work done by the individual on behalf of all of North Carolina’s dairy producers.

Dr. Donald E. Pritchard was born and raised on an Illinois dairy farm. He attended the University of Illinois where he received his B.S. and M.S. degrees, and then he completed the Ph.D. in 1970 at Michigan State University.

Upon graduation he became an area dairy agent with the Ohio Cooperative Extension Service. After 7 years, he moved to a State Dairy Specialist position at the Ohio State University. In 1987 he was appointed as the Dairy Science Extension Program Coordinator, and after one year was promoted to the position of Assistant Director for Agriculture and Natural Resources for the Ohio State University Extension.

In 1993, he took early retirement and became Professor Emeritus at the Ohio State University, but continued to work part-time as an Extension Specialist for the University. Then in 1995, he joined the North Carolina State University faculty as part-time Dairy Extension Specialist, which is the position he continues to work in today.

Since 1995, Dr. Pritchard has had primary responsibility for the milking management and mastitis extension programs. He has served as editor of the Dairy Extension Newsletter, served on the North Carolina Dairy Biosecurity Committee, compiled the "Dairy Farm Security Resource Materials Manual", and helped develop the "Foot and Mouth Disease Response Procedures Sheet" which, after appropriate training on its use, will be distributed to all dairy producers in North Carolina. He has helped coordinate the area dairy conferences held in North Carolina, and has served as chairman of the "Annual North Carolina Dairy Conference Committee", taking on the responsibilities of planning and conducting the annual dairy conference. He developed and maintains the "Dairy Extension Web Site". He continues to write monthly educational articles for use by county agents, industry representatives and producers. The articles also appear often in "Hoard's Dairyman" and in the "Mid-Atlantic Country Folks Farm Chronicle". Recently, Dr. Pritchard served on the "North Carolina Dairy Stabilization and Growth Committee", which has developed a strategic plan for the growth and stabilization of the dairy industry in North Carolina. He continues to work with others on the implementation of the plan titled Dairy Advantage.

By awarding the 2008 Distinguished Service Award to Dr. Donald Pritchard, the North Carolina Dairy Producers Association recognizes his efforts on behalf of North Carolina Dairy Producers and extends their appreciation for those efforts.
**NCSU Extension Dairy Specialists**

Dr. Geoff Benson - 919/515-5184  
dairy farm management, marketing & policy  
Dr. Brinton Hopkins - 919/515-7592  
nutrition, replacements, 4-H/Youth  
Dr. Don Pritchard - 919/515-8805  
milking management, mastitis, special programs, newsletter editor  
Dr. Steve Washburn - 919/515-7726  
reproduction and farm systems  
Dr. Lon Whitlow - 919/515-7602  
nutrition & feeding management  

**Specialized Area Ext. Agents**

(Each of the area agents serve several counties. Their home county is listed after the phone number.)  
Marti Day – 919-542-8202 – Chatham  
vacant – 336-679-2061 – Yadkin  
Lara Worden - 704-922-2118 – Gaston

**Dairy Success Program Participating County Ext. Agents**

Roger Cobb - 336/570-6740 - Alamance  
Brad Johnson – 704/633-0571 - Rowan  
Tony McGaha – 828/456-3575 - Haywood  
Carl McGaha – 336/242-2082 - Davidson  
Carl Pless - 704/920-3310 - Cabarrus  
Ken Vaughn – 704/878-3165 - Iredell

**NCSU Dairy Extension Web Page Address**


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