On January 23, 2008 the NC Dairy Strategic Plan titled Dairy Advantage was introduced. One of the plan’s action items was to establish a legal organization, composed of dairy industry representatives, to monitor and manage the programs and activities of the strategic plan. With the support of the NC Dairy Producers Association this has been accomplished. On May 14, 2008 the twenty member initial board of directors was seated. See the article on page 2 for more information on this new Association.

Work continues on the NC Dairy Security Business Continuity Plan. All producers will be invited to an informational meeting in July to learn about your role and responsibilities in the event of a foreign animal disease outbreak in this country. It is very important that you attend one of the scheduled meetings. (See the article on page 3.)

NCDPA continues to work with other Southeastern States producer groups on issues of mutual concern. The Southeast Producers Steering Committee submitted comments recently on the Interim Order issued in response to the May 22, 2007 public hearing for Federal Orders 5, 6, and 7. We continued to express our concern that the order changes proposed will not accomplish our goal of increasing local milk production significantly. We also continued our request for a publicly reported in-depth study of milk marketing in the Southeast by the Dairy Programs Division of USDA’s Agricultural Marketing Service. We have requested the Division to devise new federal order rules to better accomplish the purposes for which orders were created.

Another area of concern that the NCDPA directors are following is that of dairy animal care. At the 2007 World Dairy Expo the National Dairy Animal Well Being Initiative was introduced. This is a draft of principles and guidelines that dairy animal well being programs should include to meet our ethical obligations in the proper care of our dairy animals. The Initiative covers everything from housing and handling to nutrition. I would encourage you to view this document at www.dairywellbeing.org.

As always, the NCDPA continues to work to represent your interests, and I encourage you to support your association by being a member. Contact me at 919-742-2074 for more information.
**New North Carolina Dairy Industry Association Formed**

Over the past year or so you have read update reports on the efforts of many to develop a strategic plan for the future of the North Carolina dairy industry. The committee that developed the plan reported on it at the annual NC Dairy Conference last January, and there was a brief summary of the key recommendations in the spring issue of this newsletter. One of those key recommendations was to establish a legal organization that would, among other responsibilities, oversee the activities associated with the strategic plan. *Dairy Advantage* is the name given to the strategic plan. This new organization has been formed, and it is officially titled The North Carolina Association for Dairy Stabilization and Growth, Inc.

The people selected to represent the dairy industry as the initial board of directors of the association are Billy Johnston (president), Ronnie Trantham (Vice President), Dr. Geoff Benson (Secretary), Franklin Rash (Treasurer), Dennis Leamon, Barry Myers, Doug Holland, Monique Koopman, Dan Hunsucker, Portia McKnight, Bob Paxton, Dr. Ben Shelton, Jim Howie, Chester Lowder, Jim Abercrombie, Noel Torres, Harvey Largen, Billy Holliday, Manly Wilder, and Ken Vaughn. Appointed to serve on a Steering Committee were the four officers, Jim Howie, Chester Lowder, Norman Jordan, Jr., Leigh Lane, Scott Bissette, and Dr. Don Pritchard.

The Directors will be actively working on hiring a Dairy Development Coordinator and implementing the several key recommendations of the *Dairy Advantage* plan that address issues associated with retention, growth, and relocation of dairies in the state, as well as recruitment of new dairies. The directors will be reporting on their accomplishments in future newsletter issues.

Pictured below are the Directors and Steering Committee members who attended the May 14, 2008 first board meeting. Barry Myers, Doug Holland, Dan Hunsucker, Dr. Ben Shelton, and Jim Abercrombie, were unable to attend.
North Carolina Dairy Security Committee Schedules Information Meetings

The North Carolina Dairy Security Committee has spent over six years working on security procedures to deal with foreign animal diseases (FAD). Security people at the federal level believe that it is just a matter of time before there will likely be a FAD outbreak in our country. The USDA has a plan to deal with the infected farms after an outbreak occurs which the committee believes is not adequate for the continuation of our dairy industry. The committee has developed a plan to get the industry back up and operating as quickly as possible after a FAD outbreak. The plan focuses on actions that will promote business continuity for the industry, and it has received interest and support from some of the major dairy states.

All North Carolina dairy producers will soon be receiving a letter inviting them to attend an informational meeting to learn about the business continuity plan. At the meeting you as a dairy producer will learn what you will be expected to do and how you can be prepared to respond to a FAD outbreak should one occur. Your immediate actions in response to an outbreak notice may well determine whether or not you stay in business.

The dates and locations of the informational meetings are listed below. Your future as a dairy producer could depend on your preparedness. Please plan to attend one of these meetings.

- Asheville-Tuesday July 8, 2008 from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm at the Mountain Research Station, Fletcher; lunch will be provided
- Statesville-Wednesday July 9, 2008 from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm at the BoxCar Grille, Statesville; lunch will be provided
- Greensboro-Thursday July 10, 2008 from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm at the Guilford County Extension Center barn meeting room, Greensboro; lunch will be provided

New North Carolina Youth Dairy Day Event to be Held

Date: Friday August 8, 2008 - Time: 9:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. - Location: Rowan County Fairgrounds, Salisbury, NC - Ages: Youth ages 5 to 13

Overview: This is a new event that is designed to educate youth ages 5 to 13 about the animal and food aspects of the North Carolina dairy industry and to spark their interest in 4-H dairy youth activities. Youth will attend various “hands on” 30 minute workshops to learn about the following topics: dairy cattle judging; dairy skillathon; dairy quiz bowl; dairy cattle fitting and showmanship; dairy foods.

Lunch will be provided and awards and certificates will be presented at the closing session. The North Carolina Purebred Dairy Cattle Association (PDCA) has provided funding for this event. Mark your calendars to attend this fun and educational youth dairy day.

Please access the 4-H Dairy Program website shown below for updated information on this event and other 4-H dairy youth activities.

http://www.cals.ncsu.edu/an_sci/extension/dairy/4-H/4hdairy.htm
Youth Learn About the Dairy Industry While Having Fun Competing in the State 4-H Dairy Quiz Bowl and State 4-H Dairy Skillathon Contests

Dr. Brinton A. Hopkins
NCSU Professor and Extension Dairy Specialist

The *4-H Dairy Quiz Bowl* is a contest with dairy topic questions. Questions cover feeds and feeding, milk quality, herd health, udder health, breeding and genetics, marketing, dairy foods, calf raising, and other areas. Youth prepare for competition by studying these dairy topic areas and by reviewing contest questions from previous years’ that are available by clicking on the North Carolina 4-H Dairy Youth Program website at: [http://www.cals.ncsu.edu/an_sci/extension/dairy/4-H/4hdairy.htm](http://www.cals.ncsu.edu/an_sci/extension/dairy/4-H/4hdairy.htm)

At the contest, teams compete with each other in giving answers to questions posed by a contest moderator. The teams receive credit for correct answers and in some cases, a penalty for not answering. A written exam is also part of the senior division contest.

Quiz bowl teams compete in a series of one-on-one elimination rounds until the top team is chosen. Teams are assigned to the first round of competition, based on their total scores during Phase A, where contestants take a 50 question multiple choice exam.

In each round, during Phase B, each team is asked 5 questions of a higher degree of difficulty while Phase C is the Toss up Round where 20 questions are asked.

The *4-H Dairy Skillathon Contest* is an activity that is designed to help youth learn more about our dairy industry. Youth compete as a member of a team or as individuals in a fun and interesting contest format that includes, but is not limited to: identification of dairy products; identification of feedstuffs; identification of milking and dairy equipment; evaluation of forage samples; evaluating and judging dairy cattle; a multiple choice exam; and a team problem-solving activity.

The 2008 State 4-H Dairy Quiz Bowl and Dairy Skillathon Contests were held on Saturday April 12 at the Iredell County Agricultural Center. Funding for these contests was provided by the North Carolina Dairy Youth Foundation.

### 2008 State 4-H Dairy Quiz Bowl Contest Results:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Junior Division</th>
<th>Senior Division</th>
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<td>1. Randolph County</td>
<td>1. Randolph County</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Rowan County</td>
<td>2. Rowan County</td>
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1st Place Junior Division 4-H Dairy Quiz Bowl Team from Randolph County: Left to right: Coach Jason Wright, Mickey Jo Grubb, Sydney Davis, Rachel Osborne, and Evan Gunter

1st Place Senior Division 4-H Dairy Quiz Bowl Team from Randolph County: Left to right: Adam Frazier, Courtney Elliott, Coach Kerri Beth Frazier, Terri Lane Frazier and Katie Wicker
2008 State 4-H Dairy Skillathon Contest Results:

**Junior Division**
1. WNC All-Stars A
2. Rowan County
3. Northwest Area

**Senior Division**
1. Rowan County
2. Northwest Area
3. Randolph County

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**1st Place Junior Division 4-H Dairy Skillathon**
Team – Western NC All-Stars A Team: Left to right: coach Brad Parkins, Michaela Muse, Cameron Parkins, Jessica Klinghorn, Daniel Messer, and coach Stephanie Parkins

**1st Place Senior Division 4-H Skillathon Team**
from Rowan County: Left to right: coach Brad Johnson, Phillip Stringer, Justin Teeter, Garrett Teeter, Laura Watson, and coach David Correll

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**Kwis Setting up Dairy Farms in the US – Could North Carolina be Next?**

Dr. Steve Washburn, NCSU Extension Dairy Specialist

The cover story of the June 2008 issue of the New Zealand Dairy Exporter magazine is: “Kwis thrive on US soil.” The article goes on to describe Focal Dairies, a nearly 4,000-cow New Zealand owned and managed investment venture in western Missouri, just south of Kansas City.

Focal Dairies consists of two 1,650-cow herds on 560 ha (1,383 acres) each and milked in two separate 50-bail rotary milking parlors near Kitten Creek and a third 650-cow dairy on 259 ha (640 acres) at Kenoma and milked in a “swing-45” milking shed. These dairy units are also supported by about 1,573 acres in two tracts near the dairies for use for youngstock or dry cows. Most cows are crosses between Jersey and Holstein and cows in the two bigger herds are managed with split spring and fall calving seasons whereas the 650-cow herd is a spring-calving herd.

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Pasture-based dairy cows at one of the Focal Dairies kiwi-owned farms in Missouri
Mob feeding milk is a key to calf-raising efficiency in seasonal calving herds

But the Focal Dairies story is only part of what is happening. There are actually four different New Zealand groups investing in pasture-based dairy farms in Missouri. In addition to the three Focal Dairies farms, there are at least another dozen new operating pasture-based dairy farms in Missouri with New Zealand backing and more being planned. More recently, there have been partnership arrangements with local producers and opportunities for sharemilkers to begin to build equity in the system. All of the new dairy units have at least 300 cows and many of them have 500-cow herds operated by a manager and two employees milking in swing-40 milk sheds. Because of the Kiwis, Missouri has added over 10,000 pasture-based dairy cows the past 3 years. In addition to Missouri there are also New Zealand dairy investors setting up pasture-based dairy units in Georgia- not all that far from NC.

The new dairy farms are all pasture-based but are not solely dependent upon pasture and are more of a hybrid system. All of the dairies typically feed a moderate amount of grain in the milking shed or parlor and the large herds at Focal Dairies include covered feed-pads and sacrifice paddocks to provide flexibility for feeding corn silage and other feedstuffs across different seasons. Such dairy farms would be termed high input in New Zealand but are considered pasture-based in the US.

The New Zealanders readily admit that there are different challenges in the US than back home. Temperature ranges from 5 degrees to 104 degrees F in the past two years in Missouri are much wider than they are used to. Growth patterns for pastures vary accordingly resulting in changing needs for supplemental forages. Also, they have not been pleased with the overall fertility of the US cattle they have been using. An “empty rate” of 20-25% after 12 weeks of mating is about twice the percentage of open cows that top managers achieve in NZ.

One of the changes being seen is the influx of new terms that I could help define if needed: milk shed, swing-40, sharemilking, pasture meter, grazing wedge, grazing round, empty cows, runoff area, support block, feedpads, milk solids (MS) per cow, mob feeding, and operating costs. “Operating costs” was a trick term. All dairy producers should know their operating costs but I assure you that each one of the new pasture-based dairy units operated by the Kiwis and their partners have a keen eye on the costs and returns of these new enterprises.
So what does this mean to us in North Carolina? We have just come through strategic planning for the North Carolina dairy industry and we know that we have successful, profitable dairy farms in the state managed in different systems. But we have lost market share in the dairy industry over the past several years. Most of our current dairy farms are in the Piedmont and Mountain regions where development pressures are high and land prices have escalated. Fuel and fertilizer prices continue to climb and it just does not make much sense that we should be shipping milk longer and longer distances to supply our local needs.

For over 13 years, I have suggested that there are opportunities for pasture-based dairy farms in eastern NC and have set up research efforts at the Center for Environmental Farming Systems (CEFS) at the Cherry Research Farm in Goldsboro with that in mind. Pasture-based dairy cows do most of the forage harvesting and about 85% of the manure spreading. Cows don't rust and they tend to reproduce into more equity over time. See related items below about upcoming educational events on July 17 at CEFS and October 8-9 in VA.

Jim van der Pol, a director of Fonterra (largest dairy marketing group in NZ) visited CEFS and other areas in NC in October, 2005 along with Tony Coltman, a former Dexcel extension and development manager, to explore the resources available for pasture-based dairying in NC. Both of them are owner-investors in Focal Dairies along with Jim’s brother Kevin and family who live on site in Missouri. Because of the complexity of getting set up in Missouri, they chose not to explore opportunities in NC at that time but did not rule out that there could be opportunity here.

But why wait for the Kiwis to find their way to NC? Has your dairy been profitable in the past? Are you land-locked or limited for expansion at the current time? Did you know that “grazer” is the animal that eats the pasture and “grazier” is the person who manages the animal that eats the pasture? Are you willing to take a calculated risk? Do you have a family member who wants an opportunity to dairy in North Carolina? Have you considered managing more than one dairy at the same time? Did you know that there are dairy farmers in NZ and in the US that only milk once a day? Have you looked at the land along the highways while heading to the beach and wondered what it would look like with grazing dairy cows?

If you never think outside the box, then you may always be boxed in. Happy dairying.

**Scheduled Grazing Programs:**

**Pasture-based Dairy Workshop:** Thursday, July 17: 9:30- 3:30; Registration $20 - includes lunch: [www.cefs.ncsu.edu/PDFs/2008 Workshop Registration/dairy_reg_final.pdf](http://www.cefs.ncsu.edu/PDFs/2008 Workshop Registration/dairy_reg_final.pdf) The dairy unit at CEFS in Goldsboro will host a workshop for interested dairy producers, educators, and students. Topics will include horn fly control strategies, forage production and management, herd management, crossbreeding, and summaries of recent and on-going dairy research projects. Credit provided for pesticide and waste management re-certification. Contact Steve Washburn for more details (919-515-7726).

**Mid-Atlantic Dairy Grazing Conference and Organic Field Day:** Wed-Thurs, October 8-9. Shenandoah Valley in VA. Details coming soon. Contact Steve Washburn for more information (919-515-7726).
NCSU Extension Dairy Specialists

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-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

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NCSU Dairy Extension Web Page Address


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