

# DAIRY CONNECTION

Vol. 18, No. 4 December 2008

## EDITORIAL

Another holiday season is upon us. I want to take this opportunity to extend best wishes to what I consider my extended “dairy” family. It’s been my privilege to work for and represent you at local, state, regional and national levels.

I’d like to welcome the newest members to the extended dairy family, the van Bedafs of Carrington. It was a bit of a rocky start, but logic and common sense prevailed in the community. Thank you, Corne and Conny, for your patience. The dairy community is indeed glad you are here. I know nearly all of the Carrington area residents are glad as well.

And speaking of new dairy neighbors, the Dairy Coalition is the reason for our state’s dairy expansion prospects, but now the coalition needs your help. As we move forward, our plan is to seek state support. The first step is to show dairy solidarity. That includes renewing your membership. Please consider sending a check for a minimum of \$50 per farm per year today. Your membership will speak volumes to the Legislature about our commitment to change. The lawmakers need to know you are supportive.

The coalition has come a long way on a very modest budget. Real change is starting to take place. Changes like this involve North Dakota residents as well as new North Dakotans. Please help us keep the momentum. If we stumble here, the end is near.

For more on the Dairy Coalition and recent progress, see the insert.

Seasons greetings,



J.W. Schroeder

## Dairy Cow College Dates

The 2009 series of Dairy Cow College meetings are set:

Monday, Jan. 26 ..... Linton, Courthouse  
 Tuesday, Jan. 27 ..... New Salem, Fairgrounds  
 Wednesday, Jan. 28 ..... Dickinson, Elks Lodge  
 Thursday, Jan. 29 ..... Towner, Ranch House Café  
 Friday, Jan. 30 ..... Valley City, Eagles Club

I, along with Char Heer, Midwest Dairy Association, again will present in a late-morning to midafternoon

## INDEX

Editorial .....	1
Dairy Cow College Dates .....	1
IN THE NEWS .....	2
Holle Named to NDB .....	2
TIMELY TOPICS .....	2
Recoup 40 Cents Per Cut .....	2
LGM-Dairy Insurance Policy .....	2
Got Expansion? Get BioPACE! .....	2
CALVES .....	2
Keepin’ ’em Healthy .....	2
Cold Weather Management .....	3
NUTRITION .....	4
How Fine to Grind .....	4
Would You Drink It? .....	4
HEALTH .....	5
Weather Affects Teat Skin .....	5
Extra-label Drug Use Precaution .....	5
FORAGES .....	5
Covering Haylage Trailers Saves Money .....	5
Ensilage Corn Silage 4 to 6 Months Before Feeding .....	6
Narrow Swaths Make Highest-quality Hay .....	6
MILK QUALITY .....	6
Milk Quality Monitored .....	6
MANAGEMENT .....	7
What is More Important: Cows or People? .....	7
Be Smart When Buying Replacements .....	7
The Philosopher .....	8

**NDSU**  
**Extension Service**  
 North Dakota State University

North Dakota State University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, age, Vietnam Era Veterans status, sexual orientation, marital status, or public assistance status. Direct inquiries to the Executive Director and Chief Diversity Officer, 202 Old Main, (701) 231-7708. County Commissions, NDSU and U.S. Department of Agriculture Cooperating. This publication will be made available in alternative formats for people with disabilities upon request, (701) 231-7881.

format running from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. and include your MDA update, local reports and an educational program, along with a sponsored luncheon.

So mark your calendars now and watch for more details forthcoming from your county Extension agent and dairy processor.

## ■ IN THE NEWS

### Holle Named to NDB

Kenton Holle recently was appointed to the National Dairy Promotion and Research Board (NDB). Announced by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Kenton was one of eight new appointees and will serve Region 5 (North Dakota, South Dakota and Minnesota) for a three-year term ending in October 2011.

The NDB, established by the Dairy Production Stabilization Act of 1983, administers a coordinated program of promotions, research and nutrition education, all financed by your 15-cent-per-hundred-weight assessment on milk produced and marketed commercially.

Congratulations, Kenton, and thanks for your dedication to the dairy industry.

## ■ TIMELY TOPICS

### Recoup 40 Cents Per Cut

Information recently has come to light that all dairy producers can qualify for an income tax deduction in 2008. To receive this, you must file a Section 199 to include an IRS Form 1099 from your processor, who also must file. It could mean 40 cents per cut or more in deductions for all of the 2008 milk produced.

See your tax preparer today and contact your cooperative member services for more details.

### LGM-Dairy Insurance Policy

The Livestock Gross Margin (LGM) for Dairy Cattle Insurance Policy provides protections against the loss of gross margin (market value of milk minus feed costs) on the milk produced from dairy cows. The indemnity at the end of the 11-month insurance period is the difference, if positive, between the gross margin guarantee and the actual gross margin. The Livestock Gross Margin for Dairy Cattle Insurance Policy uses futures prices and state basis for corn, soybean meal and milk to determine the expected gross margin and the actual gross margin.

The price the producer receives at the local market is not used in these calculations.

Any producer who owns dairy cattle in North Dakota and 32 other states is eligible for LGM coverage. Only the milk sold for commercial or private sale primarily intended for final human consumption from dairy cattle fed is eligible for coverage under the policy.

The LGM is a bundled option that covers both the price of milk and feed costs. The mix of target milk marketings per dairy cow and target feed rations are supplied by the producer. This feature allows the producer to select feed rations and production levels that best reflect their actual production situation. The resulting bundle insures the producer's gross margin (milk revenue minus feed costs) during the insurance period. LGM cannot be exercised during the insurance period. LGM pays the difference, if positive, between the gross margin guarantee and the actual gross margin, as defined in the LGM provisions, at the end of the insurance period.

This is not an easy process. To find more detail, such as price used, underwriting capacity, determining feed equivalents, type of losses and feed costs, go to [www2.rma.usda.gov/help/faq/lgmdairy.html](http://www2.rma.usda.gov/help/faq/lgmdairy.html).

*Adapted from: Livestock Gross Margin-Dairy, June 2, 2008, from USDA Risk Management Web site*

### Got Expansion? Get BioPACE!

Appropriated in the 2007 Legislature, the Bank of North Dakota received \$8 million for PACE, \$4.2 million for Biofuels PACE and \$1.4 million for Ag PACE. The Biofuels PACE fund also received any unused Biodiesel PACE funds, which were estimated at \$800,000.

Like all BND projects, you must work through your local lenders. So if you are working on an expansion project, be sure to check it out. Any dairy, beef or heifer expansion project is eligible for a 5 percent reduction (buydown) in interest rates on expansion projects worth up to \$250,000.

## ■ CALVES

### Keepin' 'em Healthy

The health of replacement animals is an important component of total herd profitability.

The productivity of the herd can be impacted negatively by impaired growth of calves, decreased milk production of animals that experienced chronic illness as baby

calves, increased veterinary costs and the limited opportunity for genetic selection due to the high mortality of replacement animals. Among all animals present on a dairy farm, the highest morbidity and mortality rates generally occur in baby calves prior to weaning.

Simple exposure to infectious agents is not sufficient cause for the development of diseases in calves. In calves, the difference between health and disease is very often just a slight tip of a delicate balance that weighs calf and environmental factors with the bacterial, viral or parasitic agents to which the calf will be exposed.

Three prominent disease problems in young calf are septicemia, diarrhea and pneumonia. Septicemia is usually the result of a bacterial infection that occurs while the calf is in the uterus, or during or immediately after birth. The route of infection can be the blood of a sick dam, an infected placenta, or the calf's umbilical stump, mouth, nose or wound. Septicemia is the most severe medical problem that a calf can develop because the blood-borne infection disseminates and damages many different organs.

Diarrhea is the most common cause of death in young calves and is almost entirely avoidable through good management. The highest risk period for diarrhea is from birth until about 1 month of age. Bacteria, viruses and/or parasites cause diarrhea in calves.

Diarrhea can be managed by increasing resistance through good colostrum management, reducing pathogen exposure, reducing the impact of parasitic infections by feeding a coccidiostat, matching fluid intake with fluid loss and providing electrolytes.

Pneumonia is an inflammation of the lungs. Clinical signs of pneumonia include nasal discharge, dry cough, body temperature of less than 41 degrees Celsius, respiratory distress and decreased appetite. Pneumonia can be managed by increasing resistance through good colostrum management, reducing pathogen exposure and monitoring animals for early diagnosis and treatment.

According to Sheila McGuirk of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, the five C's provide an effective formula for managing the young dairy calf.

- Colostrum
- Cleanliness
- Comfort
- Calories
- Consistency

While the agents that cause disease are always there and can be extremely important in a disease outbreak, a comfortable, clean calf with good colostrum management, consistent feeding and management practices, and plenty of calories in the diet can be disease-free even if they become infected.

*Source: Sheila McGuirk, University of Wisconsin-Madison*

## **Cold Weather Management**

Cold weather is upon us. For all calves, energy needs go up in cold weather. Your summer feeding program will not yield the same results if fed through the winter.

The bottom thermoneutral zone for calves less than 3 weeks of age is 60 degrees Fahrenheit. Below 60, young calves must use body stores of energy to maintain their body temperature. The lower limit of the thermoneutral zone for older calves is approximately 40 degrees.

Here are some helpful tips from Sam Leadley of Attica Veterinary Associates to get your calves through winter while still gaining weight:

- If good-quality colostrum is available, feed it. When combined with one-third warm water, it makes a great calf ration that provides 17 percent dry matter and plenty of energy and protein.
- If lower-quality colostrum is available, feed it. If the supply of high-quality colostrum isn't always available, consider using lower-quality (lower antibody content) colostrum for the first five to seven days. It is still a great energy source.
- If you don't have colostrum, try saving the second milking from fresh animals. It is high in fat to provide calves with more energy.
- Feed milk from the line or the bulk tank. Try feeding it the first week during cold conditions; it has about 25 percent more energy than 20-20 replacer.
- Feed more milk replacer. If you stay with the same replacer, you can increase energy by simply feeding more of it.
- Add an extra feeding. Add a midday feeding for calves less than 2 weeks old.
- Add extra fat. If you don't want to change your feeding procedures between summer and winter, increasing fat content is also a good alternative.

# ■ NUTRITION

## How Fine to Grind

You'll have a hard time opening any dairy industry periodical and not see articles discussing high feed prices and low milk-to-feed ratios. Regardless of how high or low feed or milk prices are, dairy producers always should be looking for the biggest bang for their buck. If buying ground corn, either in a mix or alone, you should be aware of how finely the corn is ground.

Cracked corn or coarser ground corn has a lower processing cost, but it is not as efficiently used by dairy cattle. Grinding corn finer increases the surface area available for digestion. By decreasing the grind size, you may be able to improve the energy utilization, increasing milk production with the same amount of corn. The table below (adapted from data from Farmland Industries) shows the difference in performance between cracked corn and ground corn. Cows receiving ground corn had a slightly higher dry-matter intake (DMI); they produced 6 more pounds of milk per day and tended to have a higher fat and protein percent.

	Cracked Corn	Ground Corn
Milk (lb/d)	69.2	75.3
Fat (%)	3.59	3.73
Protein (%)	3.19	3.29
DMI (lb/d)	49.1	50.7
Wt. (lb/d)	+0.34	+0.67

So how do you know if your corn is ground fine enough? The most definitive method of determining grind size is sifting the corn through grain particle screens. Ground corn should be evaluated with the following sizes of screens – #4, #8, #16, #30 – and a bottom pan. The following table lists the recommended distribution **percentages** of particle size for ground corn, both dry and high-moisture (25 percent to 30 percent).

Screen Size	#4	#8	#16	#30	BottomPan
%H.M.Corn	25	50	25	—	—
%DryCorn	0	<10	30	50	<20

## Would You Drink It?

During a time of high ration cost with little likelihood of relief, we begin to look for those practices to improve performance but not add to the expense of producing milk. One area frequently overlooked on dairies is the availability and quality of water for the dairy herd.

Seventy percent to 97 percent of total water intake of dairy cattle comes from drinking water, with the remainder from feed intake. There is a strong relationship between water intake and total ration dry-matter intake. A good rule of thumb is that cows should consume 4 to 5 pounds of water (about 3 quarts) for each pound of dry-matter intake, or about 3 pounds of water for each pound of milk yield.

Cows will consume the majority of their water immediately following milking. Common guidelines state that there should be enough trough space so that half of the cows have at least 2 feet of space when exiting the parlor. Provide at least two water sources for each group of cows and remember that cows never should have to walk more than 50 feet to get a drink. Water sources should be protected from sunlight as well. Shallow water receptacles (less than 12 inches deep) are desired because they prevent stagnant water and are easier to clean.

Assuming that water is available, what's the quality? The most common water quality problem is with fecal and feed contamination. Water sources adjacent to feed bunks or placed too low are commonly loaded with manure and spoiled feed. This water is frequently unpalatable and may contain high levels of undesirable bacteria. The quickest "fix" is to drain and clean waterers on a daily basis. This practice should be done daily or at least every other day for each water source for the lactating and dry-cow herd.

Recently manufactured waters have large drain holes or may be dumped readily. In the case of concrete water tanks, consider drilling large drain holes near the bottom and devising stoppers that routinely can be removed with little effort. If this is not possible, the tanks should be replaced. Finally, water should meet similar standards as for human consumption. Test the water to determine the total dissolved solids (less than 500 parts per million, or ppm), paying special attention to levels of sodium (less than 150 ppm), chloride (less than 250 ppm), iron (.3 ppm) and manganese (.05 ppm). Nitrate contamination is of particular concern and should be less than 20 ppm as nitrate-nitrogen.

Granted, fine-tuning the ration is important, but the first step to achieving improved performance should be directed toward better management of water intake for the dairy herd. Don't let water become the limiting factor.

*Source: Bob James, Extension Dairy Scientist, Dairy Nutrition*

## ■ HEALTH

### Weather Affects Teat Skin

At least three types of weather conditions affect teat skin. When evaluating teat skin condition in a dairy herd, some consideration of previous weather and the severity of the season, as well as the likely exposure in cow housing and transit around the farm, should be recorded.

Cold winds on wet teats cause chaps. Chaps present as horizontal cracks, but not vertical cracks, open or scabbed, that follow the natural transverse folds of the shrunken teat. They may occur more obviously on the anterior surfaces of front teats and posterior surfaces of hind teats.

Sun and frost cause direct effects. Frostbite is not uncommon in very cold areas, even with a dry, cold condition. The likelihood of frozen teats depends both on air temperature and wind speed. More often, frostbite may affect front teats and distally around the teat duct orifice. Frostbite may occur when a drop of disinfectant freezes on the teat end. Teats initially may appear reddened or pale. When severe, a scab forms and eventually drops off to leave a raw teat end.

Sunburn affects pink teats and is less likely in pigmented teats. Thus, some breeds rarely suffer. Sunburn occurs most often on exposed teat skin and will be directional and not affect the whole circumference of the teat. Thus, it may affect the outside of the teats on one side of the udder and the inside of the teats on the other side of the udder.

*Source: NMC Guidelines for Evaluating Teat Skin Condition*

### Extra-label Drug Use Precaution

Baytril 100 (enrofloxacin) Injectable Solution has received U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval for the treatment of bovine respiratory disease (BRD) in dairy replacement heifers less than 20 months of age. A label restriction that previously stated "Not for use in cattle intended for dairy production" prohibited the use of Baytril 100 in dairy heifers. Due to a recent comprehensive review, the FDA's Center for Veterinary Medicine granted a modification of that restriction. The label now reads: "Not for use in dairy cattle greater than 20 months of age. Use of enrofloxacin in this class of cattle may cause residues."

A reminder recently issued by the American Association of Bovine Veterinarians (AABP) Committee on Pharmaceutical and Biologic Issues states that **the prohibition of extra-label drug use for flouroquinolone antibiotics is still in effect.** The only condition or disease for which enrofloxacin is labeled is BRD.

Use of this product, like the use of all flouroquinolone antimicrobials, for any condition or disease not on the label is a violation of federal law. Baytril 100 still is prohibited in lactating dairy cows and should be segregated on the dairy farms from those drugs used for lactating animals. It will continue to be a prescription drug to be used by or on the order of a licensed veterinarian.

*Source: AABP Newsletter, May 2008, p. 4-5*

## ■ FORAGES

### Covering Haylage Trailers Saves Money

With prices for purchased protein spiking, reducing the amount of leaf material lost during the alfalfa haylage harvest has taken on extra importance.

As one part of the strategy to reduce losses, Tindale Farms started using tarps to cover the 45-foot-long trailers it uses to transport haylage from field to bunker silos. "Like a lot of farmers, we've always resisted the idea of covering our trailers," says Scott Theunis, who heads the cropping operation at Tinedale. "But with protein costs going out of sight, we have to go all out to save as many leaves as we can. We can't feed it to the cows if it's laying out on the highway between here and the fields."

Theunis says he was somewhat surprised at how quickly loads can be covered in the field. "It really doesn't take much time to put on the tarp, maybe 30 seconds per loads," he says. "The big thing is to park the truck facing into the wind and unroll the tarp from front to back. If you do it the other way around, the wind can catch the tarp and carry it right over the top. Then it gets to be a lot more work."

*Source: eHay Weekly, Aug. 26, 2008*

## **Ensilage Corn Silage 4 to 6 Months Before Feeding**

While you are probably saying, "I'm lucky to get 30 days," here's something interesting.

For optimum starch and fiber digestibility, corn silage should be ensiled at least four months before it's fed, a recent study showed. In another, quality appeared to plateau after about six months of ensiling.

The first study, by Cumberland Valley Analytical Services, Hagerstown, Md., and Paradox Nutrition, Chazy, N.Y., looked at samples submitted to the lab between January 2004 and February 2008.

Available starch was lower during October and November than during the rest of the year. Neutral detergent fiber (NDF) digestibility was highest in samples received from September through January. Titratable acidity was lowest and pH was highest from September to December. Lactic acid was lowest from September to December and acetic acid was lowest from September to February.

"These data suggest that at least four months are required for full fermentation of corn silage," the researchers wrote.

In the other trial, by Vita Plus Corp. and Dairyland Laboratories, chopped corn was collected from incoming loads at two dairy farms. Silage from each farm was placed in 48 vacuum-sealed plastic bags, then four bags were removed monthly and frozen until analyzed for several digestibility parameters.

The researchers say change in digestibility values appeared to plateau after six months of ensiling, with total-tract starch digestibility and ruminal NDF digestibility changing the most during that time.

## **Narrow Swaths Make Highest-quality Hay**

Alfalfa hay dries faster when laid in wide swaths instead of narrow ones, but a University of Idaho study showed that it isn't as high in quality.

The researchers compared the effects of wide vs. narrow swaths and morning vs. afternoon cutting on carbohydrate and protein digestion in sheep.

Daily intake of organic matter, neutral detergent fiber, acid detergent fiber, hemicellulose, cellulose and total nonstructural carbohydrate (TNC) was higher for narrow swaths than for wide ones. Protein and TNC were higher when alfalfa was cut in the afternoon rather than in the morning, say the researchers.

## **■ MILK QUALITY**

### **Milk Quality Monitored**

Milk quality in the United States is monitored by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service's Centers for Epidemiology and Animal Health (CEAH), in conjunction with the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) and the NMC Milk Quality Monitoring Committee. The AMS provides the CEAH with bulk-tank somatic cell count (BTSCC) data from four of the nation's 10 Federal Milk Marketing Orders (FMO). The CEAH analyzes the data and reports the results annually, and the NMC provides guidance and oversight for the analysis and reporting.

In 2007, four FMO were monitored: Central, Mideast, Southwest and Upper Midwest. These FMO monitored milk from 36,528 producers in 32 states and accounted for nearly half of the country's milk supply.

The milk-weighted geometric BTSCC mean in 2007 was 260,000 cell/milliliter (compared with 249,000 in 2006 and 258,000 in 2005). The milk-weighted BTSCC takes into account the amount of milk shipped by a producer, resulting in an overall BTSCC mean of monitored milk.

The producer shipment BTSCC, which is a geometric, nonmilk-weighted mean of all shipments (all shipments have equal weight) was 298,000 in 2007 (compared with 293,000 in both 2006 and 2005).

More than 99 percent of the milk shipped in these FMO during 2007 met the current Pasteurized Milk Ordinance somatic cell count (SCC) limit of 750,000. In addition, 83.2 percent of the monitored milk had a BTSCC of less than 400,000, which is the current EU SCC regulatory limit.

Of the 36,528 producers monitored in the four FMO during 2007, 88.6 percent shipped milk with a BTSCC below 750,000 during all the months monitored, while 43.8 percent of the producers shipped milk with a BTSCC below 400,000.

Monthly monitoring continues to show that the BTSCC peak is July through September. In 2007, monthly milk-weighted BTSCC was highest during August (299,000) and lowest in December (232,000).

Data from 2007 shows an increase of 11,000 cells/milliliter in the milk-weighted geometric mean BTSCC, compared with 2006. Twelve of the 14 states shipping 60 percent or more of their milk through the four FMO monitored in the study had a higher BTSCC in 2007, compared with 2006. The largest increase was observed in the Southwest FMO (primarily Texas and New Mexico).

## ■ MANAGEMENT

### What is More Important: Cows or People?

“Put the customer first” is an age-old business mantra. And in the grand scheme of things, this is and always will be true. However, a lot of people would say that in a company with many employees, the customer is actually second.

According to this argument, you should put the employees first. In other words, if you focus on making sure your employees *enjoy* what they do and *care* about how they do it, the customer will benefit and have a great experience. Ultimately, by taking care of employees first, customers truly feel like they are No. 1.

OK, so what does that have to do with your dairy? As I see it, cows are actually your customers. If you take good care of them, they will reward you with top-notch milk and calves for years to come. If you take really good care of them, you’ll get *a lot* of quality milk and calves.

At most dairies, the majority of time and money is allocated to addressing the needs of the cattle. And for the most part, that makes perfect sense. Without good cows (customers), you’d go out of business.

Now, I’m not saying that putting the cows first is wrong by any means. I’m just looking at the dairy from a slightly different perspective. For example, how many hours do you invest meeting with your vet, nutritionist and hoof trimmer to manage the overall herd and troubleshoot specific cows? Now, how many hours do you invest in your team and each individual to troubleshoot specific areas of the dairy?

Ideally, the answer for the number of hours spent with your team would be the larger of the two. Why? Generally speaking, when one cow stops producing or starts causing problems, her performance doesn’t affect all the other cows in the herd. Yes, dealing with this one cow is necessary - you either fix her or ship her out the door. But again, her impact is usually isolated to just that one animal.

In the case of employees, one milker has an impact on *all* the cows (and co-workers). If just one milker is untrained, disgruntled or simply not committed to taking care of your customers (cows), the entire herd is at risk. To truly put your cows first, start with your employees. Your employees, after all, are what make you and your cows successful. Continue to educate, communicate and motivate your team to do what’s best for the cattle. Success surely will follow.

*Source: Progressive Dairyman, Tom Wall*

### Be Smart When Buying Replacements

Hearing a dairyman say: “We were doing OK with our herd until we brought in new cows. Then we got hit with \_\_x\_\_ and we’ve been trying to dig out of trouble ever since” is not unusual. That “x” often is filled in with BVD, Staph Aureus or mycoplasma mastitis, hairy heel warts or Johnes Disease.

If you are maintaining or expanding a dairy herd, you must make decisions on selecting and purchasing dairy cattle and you, too, are vulnerable to buying in disease.

In the April 2008 issue of Udder Topics, the National Mastitis Council posted a summary of suggestions Herman Barkema, University of Calgary, presented at the NMC annual meeting in 2008 on smart strategies to use to avoid buying disease. The following is a summary of the key points on strategies to avoid bring udder infection into your herd. Go to [www.nmconline.org](http://www.nmconline.org) for full text.

**Point 1: Be selective on where you choose to purchase replacements.** Set standards to gauge the biosecurity risks of buying replacements from a herd of origin. Look for these traits in the herd:

- Herd somatic cell count (SCC) rolling average of less than 200,000 for at least one year
- Records available on individual cow SCC reported bimonthly for the previous six months
- Herd should provide information on pathogens present on farm
- Herd should be BVD-free or vaccinated
- Herd must not have cows with severe teat lesions
- Owner must be honest and willing to give you all this information

**Point 2: Be sure that the cows you are considering purchasing meet these standards:**

- Cow must never have exceeded 200,000 SCC in her life
- Cow should have at least three most recent SCC in current lactation under 100,000
- Cow should have been given dry-cow treatment if being offered for sale in early lactation

**Point 3: Once you purchase the new cow(s), take these actions before putting them in your herd:**

- Examine udder, teats and milk **upon arrival** to your farm.
- If replacements are lactating, check the California mastitis test (CMT) for three consecutive days.

This newsletter may be copied for noncommercial, educational purposes in its entirety with no changes. Requests to use any portion of the document (including text, graphics or photos) should be sent to [NDSU.permission@ndsu.edu](mailto:NDSU.permission@ndsu.edu). Include exactly what is requested for use and how it will be used.

- Milk the new replacements last until all CMT tests are negative for these three consecutive days.
- Send cows back to the vendor if udder health abnormalities are found within two weeks of purchase (you'll have to have this part of the purchase agreement).

I hope these points will give you the encouragement to be selective about what you purchase. Cows are expensive, and no one wants to throw money away on an infect animal, or worse yet, bring infection to your herd and thus cause even more financial stress. You are the gatekeeper to your herd's health. **Be smart, set standards and stick to your standards.**

*Source: Chris Mondak,  
ISU Extension-NW Iowa*

## The Philosopher

In ancient Greece, Socrates was widely lauded for his wisdom. One day the great philosopher came upon an acquaintance who ran up to him excitedly and said, "Socrates, do you know what I just heard about one of your students?"

"Wait a moment," Socrates replied. "Before you tell me, I'd like you to pass a little test. It's called the Triple Filter Test."

"Triple Filter Test?"

"That's right," Socrates continued. "Before you talk to me about my student, let's take a moment to filter what you're going to say. The first filter is Truth. Have you made absolutely sure that what you are about to tell me is true?"

"No," the man said, "actually I just heard about and ..."

"All right," said Socrates. "So you don't really know if it's true or not."

"Now, let's try the second filter, the filter of Goodness. Is what you are about to tell me about my student something good?"

"No, on the contrary ..."

"So," Socrates continues, "you want to tell me something bad about him, even though you're not certain it's true?"

The man shrugged, a little embarrassed.

Socrates continued. "You may still pass the test, though, because this is a third filter – the filter of Usefulness. Is what you want to tell me about my student going to be useful to me?"

"No, not really ..."

"Well," concluded Socrates, "if what you want to tell me is neither True nor Good nor even Useful, why tell it to me at all?"

The man was defeated and ashamed.

Author Unknown