



News & Views

The latest dairy news



Werths Named 2009 MMPA OYDC

Jeremy and Summer Werth of Alpena, Mich., have been named MMPA's 2009 Outstanding Young Dairy Cooperators. A panel of judges selected the Werths following the annual OYDC Conference held August 5-6. The couple represents MMPA District 12 and the Hillman Local. As MMPA OYDC, they will represent MMPA at several events including the National Milk Producers Federation Annual Meeting in Grapevine, Texas, this November.

Tom and Heather Wing, of Bellevue, Mich., were named the 2009 OYDC Runners-up. The Wings represent MMPA District 4 and the Barry-Eaton Local.

Highlights of the OYDC Conference appear on pages 16-19 of this issue. The Werths and the Wings will be featured in the October issue of the *Messenger*. All of the District OYDC representatives will be featured in upcoming issues of the *Messenger*.

July Class III Price Unchanged from June

The July Class III price is \$9.97, unchanged from June and down \$8.27 from last year. The July Class IV is \$10.15, down 7 cents from June and down \$6.45 from a year ago.

NMPF Applauds Expansion of Dairy Price Support Program to Help Farmers

Five weeks after NMPF asked for additional economic assistance for struggling dairy farmers, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) agreed to expand the Dairy Product Price Support Program in a way that should boost farm-level income.

In a decision announced July 31 by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, USDA said it will temporarily increase purchase prices for cheese and nonfat dry milk. The prices will rise from \$1.13 per pound for block cheese to \$1.31; barrel cheese, from \$1.10 per pound to \$1.28; nonfat dry milk powder, from \$0.80 per pound to \$0.92.

"Once again, Agriculture Secretary Vilsack has used the tools at his disposal to help dairy farmers cope with the extreme drop in farm-level prices, and we appreciate his hard work on our members' behalf," said Jerry Kozak, President and CEO of NMPF.

The new levels, which were imposed as of Aug. 1 and expire after Oct. 31, are higher than those requested by NMPF on June 26. NMPF had asked that the USDA raise purchase prices for block and barrel cheese by six cents a pound, and for nonfat dry milk by four cents a pound. Higher product prices will translate into higher farm-level prices, according to NMPF. The USDA estimates this will raise farmer income by \$243 million.

"This step by USDA to raise farm-level milk prices comes at a critical time, and is yet another important effort the agency has made to help dairy farmers survive the worst recession in their lifetimes," said Kozak.

Under the Dairy Product Price Support Program, the USDA serves as a buyer of last resort to help clear commodity dairy markets during periods of exceptionally low farm-level prices. NMPF had worked during passage of last year's Farm Bill to revise the price support program to allow the agency to boost individual dairy product price levels.

Upcoming Events

September

29 Advisory Committee – Lansing

Michigan Department of Agriculture Urges Livestock Owners to Remove Old Batteries from Pastures

Lead poisoning can lead to livestock deaths and farm quarantine

The Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA) recently quarantined four farms in Barry, Cheboygan, Tuscola, and Marquette counties due to toxic levels of lead in cattle. Quarantined farms may not allow any exposed animals to leave the farm or go to slaughter.

“Lead toxicity in livestock is a food safety and public health concern that has the potential to impact human health, as a portion of the metal consumed may accumulate in the muscle or pass through the affected animal’s milk to offspring and humans. We normally document one to two cases of lead toxicity per year, but this year MDA veterinarians have documented 34 animals on four farms,” said MDA Toxicologist Dr. John Buchweitz. “None of the cases involve milk production or supply.”

Cattle on three of the four farms may have had access to abandoned lead-acid batteries, which are used in automobiles, boats, and All Terrain Vehicles. Severe lead poisoning is found more often in young farm animals as they are more curious about their environment. The signs of illness may include blindness, excessive drooling, muscle tremors and twitching of eyelids, teeth gnashing, and convulsions.

Less severe lead poisoning, usually seen in sheep or older cattle, may appear as anorexia, colic, dullness, and temporary constipation, often followed by diarrhea, blindness, head pressing, and stumbling.

“Lead can enter the blood and soft tissues when livestock lick or chew on old batteries, lead pipes, and lead paint,” Buchweitz said. “The toxin can eventually redistribute to the bone, muscle, milk, and internal organs. If damage is widespread, particularly to the nervous system, the animal may not recover.”

The length of time the animals are under quarantine varies. Some are released within a few months and other quarantines may go on for years, depending on how soon the lead levels drop below the accepted standard. Extensive treatment and testing under the supervision of a veterinarian can be long-term and expensive. For example, in May, MDA released an Upper Peninsula Marquette County farm’s three-year quarantine when the last affected cow cleared. Milk from affected cattle cannot be consumed and must be disposed of properly.

Lead batteries are accepted for recycling at a number of Michigan stores and car repair facilities that sell lead-acid batteries. Facility owners may charge for recycling batteries, so it is best to call before drop-off. To find a battery drop-off site visit: www.ggg3.org/programs_battery_recycling.htm.

For more information on lead toxicity in animals visit the Merck Veterinary Manual at: www.merckvetmanual.com.

For information on animal health, visit MDA’s Animal Industry Division at: www.michigan.gov/mda.

Producers scoring 95 percent or more on Grade A Surveys and Federal Check Ratings

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July 2009

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July 2009

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