

The Mission of the Northeast Iowa Community Based Dairy Foundation is to enhance and grow the dairy industry through people by providing education, demonstration and research.

Vision: Successful dairy farm families supported by a thriving dairy industry which in turn supports vital local communities.

The Northeast Iowa Community Based Dairy Foundation works with Northeast Iowa Community College and Iowa State University to offer educational programs to students and existing dairy farm families to help them prepare for the future.

Thank you for your generosity & memberships!

A huge thank you to the individuals and corporations who have recently become members and/ or made contributions

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Have an idea, comment or suggestion for the Northeast Iowa Community-Based Dairy Foundation? Let us know!

Call 563-534-9957, email info@iowadairycenter.com or talk to a member of the executive board. Thanks!

Be sure to visit us online at www.iowadairycenter.com

DAIRY CENTER Connection

News from the Northeast Iowa Community-Based Dairy Foundation



NORTHEAST IOWA DAIRY FOUNDATION, PRODUCERS AND NICC STUDENTS TOUR DAIRY INDUSTRY IN CALIFORNIA

A group of 43 dairy producers participated in a California Dairy Tour organized by the Northeast Iowa Dairy Foundation from March 5-10 to learn more about the state's dairy industry.

The trip offered opportunities for the group to learn more about dairy operations in California, which is currently the number one dairy production state in the U.S. Members of the tour group – who collectively manage 4,834 milk cows in Iowa, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Illinois – met with representatives of the Western United Dairymen, toured dairies in Escalon, Oakdale and Hillmar, Calif., and observed the many environmental struggles farmers are facing in the state, particularly with severe drought conditions and water use restrictions.

“The California Dairy Tour is a way for our Dairy Foundation to give back to its membership and offer more opportunities for our dairy producers,” according to Megan Kregel, Iowa’s Dairy Center coordinator and the lead organizer of the trip. “We were able to see how the dairy industry is changing in California; particularly in regard to ground going into nut tree production instead of forage production. Farmers must manage their operations differently than we do in the Midwest, particularly because of its diverse environment and water regulations. We tend to get so locked into what we’re doing on our farms that it’s great to broaden our horizons.”

Turn to California, page 3.



Midwest dairy producers at an almond orchard in Manteca, California.

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Northeast Iowa Community-Based Dairy Foundation



A Word from the President - Phil Hemesath

As we exit another long, cold winter, we look forward to spring and all the hope and new beginnings that come with it. Farmers are always optimistic that the spring weather will be favorable to get crops in, and off to the start of a bumper crop. That's the great part of being a farmer, especially in Northeast Iowa; we get a new start each crop year, it's almost like a new beginning and that is exciting.

As has been reported in previous messages, the dairy herd continues to reach new goals. The Holsteins are close to having a 30,000 pound rolling herd average and the Jerseys have passed the 21,000 pound RHA mark. Butterfat levels for both breeds have also exceeded 1,100 pounds RHA. The excellent milk prices of the past year have made our bottom line look very good. This coming year will certainly be more challenging because of the lower milk prices. We are participating in USDA's Margin Protection Program to try to reduce the potential loss of revenue.

Several updating and remodeling projects may have to be delayed if revenues fall significantly. The operations committee will be challenged to prioritize the plans and give direction on how to proceed. All projects will be done eventually with the strong support of NICC and careful management.

The Turkey River Watershed Project made much progress last fall and we are looking forward to its comple-

tion this year. We encourage our members and everyone to drive onto the campus and look at the conservation work that has been done, especially after the waterways and buffers have greened up. It is an effort to be very proud of.

Early in March, our coordinator, Megan Kregel, with help from Rob Hahn, took 43 area producers to tour several California dairies. This group included eight students from NICC. They were treated to a diverse experience including a trip to Yosemite National Park and a winery in addition to the dairies. From the comments I heard it was well done and an excellent trip. More trips are being planned for the future so I hope more people can take advantage of these opportunities.

A disaster of major proportions was averted on Sunday evening, March 22, due to the quick response of campus personnel and the fire departments of Calmar and Fort Atkinson. The damage to the robotic area, boardroom and viewing/display area was significant. It will probably be June before all is restored to original condition-in time for the Breakfast on the Farm event. The robots were back on line as of Monday afternoon, March 23.

I will close with a big "thank you" to our members who have contributed time and money to the Foundation this past year. I am also asking for monetary commitments to the Capital Campaign Fund.

NICC Calmar officials show off their land stewardship projects to Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northey

Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northey toured the NICC Calmar campus Wednesday, March 18, to get a look at projects the state has funded as part of the Central Turkey River Nutrient Reduction Demonstration Project.

In the past four years NICC has re-established wetland areas and created rain garden bioswales to reduce storm water and nutrient runoff into the Turkey River watershed. The school has also created a rock chute wetland to reduce soil erosion near Iowa's Dairy Center and completed work on the water sediment control basin. Other land stewardship initiatives and aesthetic improvements planned at the Calmar campus include the dredging of an existing pond that was created in 1981 near the Dairy Center and, tentatively, the implementation of an urban conservation planning grant. Grant funding through Rockwell Collins and the Iowa Living Roadways programs has provided additional support for the creation of a butterfly garden, savanna, grassland and prairie areas, and shelter belt. Winneshiek County Soil and Water Conservation District project coordinator Michelle Elliott told Secretary Northey she's excited about the project because "historically we haven't had (demonstration) projects in this part of Winneshiek County." NICC President Dr. Liang Chee Wee told Northey that doing the projects on a community college campus

makes them more visible, since students and others can see the projects in action. NICC officials discovered that the Calmar campus has a total of 15 acres of space as impervious surfaces, meaning one-inch of rainfall would lead to 480,000 gallons of runoff. The use of the cover crops, retention ponds and other techniques has significantly slowed down that runoff. "We've done a lot," said Dr. Wee. Iowa's Dairy Center serves as a best practices model of sustainable agriculture that utilizes 100% corn silage, 100% no-till and 100% cover crop strategies to reduce the operation's environmental footprint and minimize soil erosion and pollution into waterways, according to Dave Lawstuen, NICC dairy science instructor and chair of dairy operations. "As part of our participation in the project, the College and Iowa's Dairy Center have addressed water issues. We installed a rain garden to slow the water, catch it and utilized a grass waterway to re-direct the water, where we are now able to grow hay on the area," Lawstuen explained. Northey said that he's optimistic the Iowa legislature will vote this spring to increase funding for Water Quality Improvement grants. The program received \$2.5 million in 2014 and \$4.5 million in 2015 and is expected to receive \$7.5 million for 2016. Northey says legislators have been supportive of the new budget.

Become a Dairy Foundation Member today! Also 'like' us on facebook @ facebook.com/neiowadairyfoundation

Join the Northeast Iowa Dairy Foundation and contribute to the future of the dairy industry!

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Mail to: Northeast Iowa Dairy Foundation, Attn: Coordinator
P.O. Box 400, Calmar, IA 52132

Please make checks payable to the Northeast Iowa Dairy Foundation.

Thank you for your contribution. A receipt will be mailed to you.

Please credit \$25 as my annual membership

Please credit \$250 as my lifetime membership

Please update my membership record with the information at left.

Please call me to discuss a gift idea.

I would like to include the Dairy Foundation in my estate plan. Please call me to discuss.

The Northeast Iowa Community-Based Dairy Foundation was created for educational purposes and has been designated as an IRS Sec. 501 (c)3 public charitable educational organization for federal income, estate and gift tax purposes.



NICC President Liang Chee Wee, SWCD staffers Michelle Elliott and Corey Meyer and Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northey.

Dairy Science Student news

Dairy Club to Host Annual Sale

The NICC Dairy Science Club Sale will be April 11, 2015 at 11:30am in West Union, Iowa.

If you have any questions about the sale, or would like to request a catalog please contact one of the following:

Ashley Bushman - 563-379-7781

Adam Drenckhahn - 507-458-4644

Emily Peters - 319-480-7028

Auctioneer: Chris Lundgren - 920-517-8947

Jesse Mensen - 563-542-7726

Pedigrees: Jason Steinlage - 319-596-5663

NICC Students Compete at National PAS

The National Postsecondary Agricultural Student Organization (PAS) is an organization associated with agriculture/agribusiness and natural resources offerings in approved postsecondary institutions offering baccalaureate degrees, associate degrees, diplomas and/or certificates.

The National Conference was held March 11 - 14, 2015 in Boise, Idaho where fifteen NICC students competed in various dairy, livestock and John Deere contest areas. Highlights were as follows:

Dairy:

Team of Summer Johnson, Clare Cook, and Justin Schaffer placed third overall; Summer Johnson was the second overall individual.

Team of Chase Saxton, Brittany Nelson, and Cody Freland placed fifth overall; Chase Saxton was eighth overall individual.

Team of Austin Vander Haak, Bryon Franks, and Adriana Aldinger placed ninth overall; Austin Vander Haak was tenth overall individual.

Livestock:

NICC livestock team of Cody Opperman and Joe Goedken placed 5th overall; Cody Opperman was fifth overall individual.

AMSTA:

The team in the Agriculture Machinery Service Technician Award area was Mitchel Czapiewski and Caleb Frank who placed second overall; Caleb Frank also placed second overall as an individual.

College Bowl:

The college bowl team of Summer Johnson, Clare Cook, Justin Schaffer, Cody Opperman, and Caleb Frank placed third overall out of 38 teams.



California from page 1

A presentation from Western United Dairymen started the group's tour on March 5 in Modesto, Calif., with discussions about the myriad environmental issues the state faces, including air quality, ozone regulations that govern emissions from silage piles, climate change, the nutrient management plans the state requires of dairy producers to add cows to their herds, and ground water regulations.

Additional tour stops included the 1,600-cow herd at Wagner Dairy in Escalon; Crossview Dairy, a 1,300-crossbred cow operation in Oakdale; Travaille and Phippen, Inc., who grow, pack and ship California Almonds in Manteca; Clauss Dairy, one of the many Hilmar dairies that between three farms milk 5,000 cows; and finally Hilmar Cheese Plant, the nation's largest single site cheese factory, in Hilmar.

The group also enjoyed a winery tour, a valley floor tour at Yosemite National Park and exploring the sights and sounds of San Francisco.

Eighty percent of those who participated in the California Dairy Tour are active dairy producers and were joined by eight NICC students, as well as industry members.

"Everything went exceptionally well for a trip of this length and group this large," said Joe Gibbs, a dairy producer from Epworth who milks 70 registered cows. "I had a fabulous time. It was a fun, enjoyable trip with a great group of new friends. The Dairy Foundation did a tremendous job of putting this whole event together."

Thank you to the following organizations and businesses sponsored meals for the group: Accelerated Genetics, Brickl Bros., Elanco, Iowa State University Extension & Outreach, Iowa State Dairy Association/Midwest Dairy Association, and the Northeast Iowa Dairy Foundation.

Additional photos from the trip are on the Foundation's facebook page at www.facebook.com/neiowadairyfoundation. The Dairy Foundation plans to offer a dairy related trip annually during the winter months; going to California every other year.

FIRE STARTS AT IOWA'S DAIRY CENTER ON MARCH 22; LOCAL FIRE DEPARTMENTS EXTINGUISH FIRE

At approximately 6 p.m. on Sunday, March 22, a fire started at Iowa's Dairy Center, located just south of the Northeast Iowa Community College (NICC) Calmar campus on Hwy. 150. The Calmar and Ft. Atkinson fire departments responded to the fire, and there were no injuries or animals hurt.

The fire originated in the robotics room, alarms in the facility sounded and staff who were milking in the adjacent parlor, apart from the robotics milking system, discovered the smoke. Fire departments had the fire under control by approximately 9:30 p.m. on March 22, and on Monday, March 23, NICC and dairy center officials re-established the robotics system and milking resumed in the afternoon, according to Megan Kregel, Dairy Center coordinator.

"We are so fortunate that everyone is safe; the Dairy Center staff did a remarkable job of ensuring the safety of our livestock," Kregel expressed. "The process will take some time, but we look forward to regaining all functionality to the robotic area, including the viewing area and conference room. We thank everyone for their support thus far."

Damage estimates are not currently known. Fortunately, damage was apparently limited to interior walls and ceiling trusses; the roof and exterior walls remain intact.

"NICC and the Dairy Foundation are working diligently with insurance and other agencies to bring Iowa's Dairy Center back to full working order as quickly as possible," Kregel added.

Breakfast on the Farm

Make plans now to be part of this fun family event! Enjoy a wholesome breakfast featuring Dad's Belgian Waffles, learn about modern agriculture practices, and tour the Dairy Center's 280-cow farm.



NEW - addition of a second tent and faster serving line!

Parking will be available on-site.

Date **June 20, 2015**
 Time **8:30 a.m. - noon**
 Place **Iowa's Dairy Center
 Calmar, IA**

Donations accepted



Coordinated by:



Find out more: www.iowadairycenter.com or call 563-534-9957

First Farm Solar Workshop to Share Incentives, Best Practices

What: Farm Solar Workshop

When: Friday, April 10, 1 p.m.

Where: Iowa's Dairy Center, south of NICC's Calmar Campus on HWY 150
***Register: There is no cost to attend, but registration is required.** Register by visiting www.energydistrict.org and click on 'Farm Solar Workshop,' or contact Kayla Koether at kayla@energydistrict.org or (563)-880-6873.

While some Northeast Iowa farmers have already taken advantage of renewable energies, others are looking for the inside track on technologies, trends, and economics. Thus, the Winneshiek Energy District, Iowa's Dairy Center and Northeast Iowa Community College will host a Farm Solar 'How-To' Workshop at Iowa's Dairy Center on April 10th at 1:00 p.m. Presenters will share the steps to installing a solar system, explain tax incentives and pay-back times, and discuss why farms should incorporate efficiency measures in tandem with renewable installations. A group of experts including tax professionals, solar installers, and farmers with solar arrays will be on hand to share key information and answer questions. A solar expo featuring local solar installers will immediately follow the workshop.

If you asked grain farmers Chuck and Sanna Feldman how they feel about their solar system, you'd get a raving review. "We're so happy with it, we're anticipating adding more [solar]!" Sanna says. The Feldmans, who farm in the Cresco area, built a 22.8 kW system in fall of 2013, and they say it's dovetailed perfectly into their farm. They're not alone in that conclusion; solar panels have been cropping up all across Northeast Iowa and beyond, causing farmers to glance over the fence and wonder if they, too, should be farming the sun. With solar thermal panels to heat water, or solar photovoltaic panels to generate electricity, solar is becoming an extremely versatile technology well-suited to many different types of farm operations. Coupled with current Federal and State tax credits, solar innovations provide a great opportunity for farmers

Upcoming Events for Iowa's Dairy Center

Call 563-534-9957 if you are interested in learning more about any of these programs/events. A current calendar of events can be found at www.iowadairycenter.com.

- April 2-6 – Campus Closed
- April 2 – 4H Club tour
- April 7 – Swiss Valley Field Rep meeting
- April 9 – Lely Journey Tour
- April 10 – Farm Solar Workshop, 1pm
- April 11 – NICC Dairy Club Sale, West Union
- April 11 – Winneshiek County Dairy Banquet, Ossian
- April 15 – NICC Scholarship Luncheon
- April 15 – Dairy Story, South Winn, CFS
- April 16 – Dairy Story, Nashua Plainfield
- April 16 – AgriScience Banquet, 6pm
- April 17 – Operations/Executive Committee Meetings
- April 17 – Dairy Story, Waukon
- April 21 – Dairy Story, Riceville
- April 23 – Regional Extension Council Meeting
- April 27 – Dairy Story, Notre Dame
- April 28 – Sumner Fredericksburg 1st grade tour
- May 1 – Dairy Story, Howard Winn
- May 6 – Dairy Story, West Central, NorthWinn, Oelwein
- May 7 – Dairy Story, Decorah
- May 8 – WCCVB Tour
- May 8 – Dairy Story, Eastern Allamakee, Decorah
- May 14 – Calmar Graduation
- May 15 – Operations/Executive Committee Meetings

to save money and work towards sustainability.

There is no cost to attend, but pre-registration is required. The workshop will take place at 1:00 p.m. Friday, April 10, at Iowa's Dairy Center, directly south of the NICC Calmar Campus on HWY 150. An expo and light refreshments will follow. To learn more and to register, visit www.energydistrict.org and click on 'Farm Solar Workshop,' or contact Kayla Koether at kayla@energydistrict.org or (563)-880-6873.