

IMPACT STATEMENT

Advanced Dairy Skills Training In Spanish

Benefits Farmers, Farmworkers and Farms

The Need

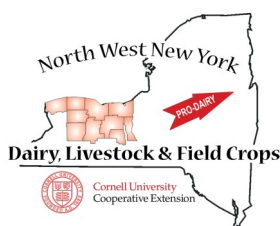
Area dairy farms have seen the benefit of providing training and meeting facilitation in Spanish through the NWNY team's bilingual dairy support program. Farms have utilized its services for regular staff meetings and group trainings on their farms. While this program has served area farms well, farmers had an emerging need to provide more specialized and technical training to individual employees. Many of the agribusinesses that offer similar services only provide only one-day, synoptic trainings which are often designed to subtly promote their products. Other options which provide such extensive training on-farm did not seem cost effective for only one employee. Dairy managers needed a comprehensive training designed for Spanish-speaking employees who are heads of their departments on their farms. Hands-on, training along with an education on the underlying principles of anatomy, biology, immunology and husbandry was necessary.

Extension Response

The NWNY Team's bilingual dairy support program recognized this need, and in late 2010 canvassed area dairy farmers for ideas on the most needed training topics. It was discovered that the two most needed topics for education were for Calf Barn Managers and Reproduction Technicians. Next, partnerships with area agencies and expertise were cultivated, primarily with CRi/Genex, Sam Leadley of Attica Veterinary Associates and the Team's own Jerry Bertoldo, DVM. These collaborations were necessary in order to provide a relevant, comprehensive, and functional education. Area farms were then contacted to determine host farms for the workshops. Finally, two workshops were organized and scheduled. Curricula were developed and sets of materials were created for the employees to take with them. One workshop was a 3-day, 15-hour training focused on Calf Care: Birth to Weaning. The second training focused on reproduction on dairies, primarily the bovine estrus cycle, working within ovulation synchronization programs, and artificial insemination.

The Results

Nine area dairies sent 19 employees to the training workshops. Lamb Farms, Inc. hosted the Calf Care workshop while Mulligan Farms, Inc. hosted the workshop on reproduction. Collaboration with the multiple parties mentioned above was extremely fruitful, because myriad hand-outs, presentations, SOPs were created/translated and used in the training. For the Calf Care workshop, all employees improved their knowledge of their jobs as measured by a pre-test and a post-test. The reproduction workshop involved follow-up visits to each farm to help guide the novice A.I. technicians. The workshops were also well-received by employees, who learned a great deal from the trainers as well as from themselves. The workshops became a forum to discuss their responsibilities at their own farms and share information. As measured by the Team, the workshops have had a significant impact on improving productivity and employee management on dairy farms. As measured by farmers and the attending employees, the workshops not only had a significant impact on productivity and employee management but also on employer-employee relationships. Employees appreciate the investment that has been made in them. Employers have strengthened confidence in their employees and have peace of mind knowing that because of these educational workshops, their employees are able to be good, independent decisions without micromanagement.



NWNY Dairy, Livestock & Field Crops Team

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