Benefits, Challenges, and Solutions for Pasture-based Dairy Management

Thursday August 9, 2012 (9 a.m. to 4 p.m.)
Michigan State University
W.K. Kellogg Biological Station
3700 E. Gull Lake Drive, Hickory Corners, MI 49060
Terrace Room (second floor of KBS Academic Building)

9:00 AM  Why Graze?     Laura Paine
9:45 AM  Benefits, Challenges, and Solutions Diana Stuart and Becky Schewe
10:30 AM  Coffee/ Snack break
10:45 AM  Focus Group Discussion sessions
          1) What do you think are the benefits of grazing – Health benefits, Environmental impacts, What do you think consumers think?, How to market pasture-based products to the public?
          2) Direct marketing, cooperatives, niche-markets for pasture-based products – What are the challenges and how have individuals succeeded?
          3) Farmer's perceptions of grazing – Low tech vs. high tech, Yield impacts, Forward thinking or backwards
          4) Extension and Research – What are the needs for grazers that differ from confinement? What are the research priorities? How can you better service grazers?
12:00 PM  Lunch @ McCrary Dinning Hall
1:00 PM  Summary of Discussion Section – Participant Volunteer, 5-10 min
2:00 PM  Facilitated Panel Discussion - Mat Haan (KBS), Howard Straub III (KBS), Karen Lubbers (Lubber’s Farm), Laura Paine (Wisconsin Department of Agriculture), Lisa Halbert (MSU Veterinary Medicine)
4:00 PM  Optional Tour of KBS Dairy Facility
Why Graze?
Benefits, challenges, and solutions for pasture-based dairy management

Dr. Diana Stuart, Michigan State University
Dr. Becky Schewe, Mississippi State University

Research
80 interviews:
- 20 grazing/conventional milking
- 20 grazing/robotic milking
- 20 confinement/conventional milking
- 20 confinement/robotic milking

Benefits and motivations of grazing
- Sustainability
- Lifestyle flexibility
- Reduced cost
- Animal health

Challenges of grazing
- Decreased production
- High debt loads
- Securing land base
- Finding information and support

Grazing resources and support
- KBS research and grants
- MSU extension
- NRCS extension and grants
- SARE grants

Benefits of non-traditional marketing
- Control over product
- Larger profit share

Challenges of non-traditional marketing
- New skill set
- Marketing
- Working with customers