

Preface

It is a pleasure to update our progress by bringing you these summaries of recent research. The U.S. Dairy Forage Research Center is a unique part of the national research program of the Agricultural Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture. The Center's mission is to build a knowledge and technology base for the dairy industry to fully exploit the use of forages in the production of milk. The Center has agricultural engineers, plant and soil scientists, microbiologists, ruminant nutritionists and a chemist working together to increase the efficiency of forage production and utilization by dairy farmers. We function in close cooperation with the Agricultural Experiment Stations of several states. The Center is located on the campus of the University of Wisconsin, Madison, and has "Cluster" locations in St. Paul, MN, Ames, IA, East Lansing, MI, and Ithaca, NY. The Center's research farm with facilities for 300 milking cows is located on 63 acres of USDA land on the banks of the Wisconsin River in Prairie du Sac, WI. An additional 1200 acres of adjacent land is utilized by the Center by agreement with the U.S. Department of the Army. The Center was established in 1980 and has made steady growth since. At present there are fifteen scientists: ten at Madison, and one at each of three Cluster locations, and two at the St. Paul, Minnesota Cluster location. Scientists hold faculty appointments in university departments and provide supervision for approximately 15-20 graduate students and 5-10 post doctoral fellows.

We are losing one of our colleagues this year, as Dr. Buxton in Ames, IA is taking a position on the National Program Staff of ARS in Beltsville, MD. Dwayne has been a very productive scientist and we will miss him very much. His research on questions of forage quality, forage production, and his more recent work with corn silage has always been very relevant to the needs of producers. We are uncertain about the future for the cluster position in Ames. From the U.S. Dairy Forage point of view, we would like to fill Dwayne's position with a new recruit. This, however, is being weighed against considerable pressure within ARS to consolidate outlying programs.

Another of our colleagues has also moved. Dr. Tilak Dhiman, having spent the last eleven years at the U.S. Dairy Forage Center, first as a post-doc and then as an assistant and associate scientist, has accepted an assistant professor position at Utah State University in Logan.

While we are saying farewell to two long time associates, we welcome Dr. Mark Powell. Mark is an agroecologist, and has been hired through a joint program supported by the University of Wisconsin College of Agricultural and Life Sciences and the U.S. Dairy Forage Research Center. Mark will be working with both ARS and college scientists to help develop and integrate research efforts in the area of nutrient management.

We received additional funding for our research efforts on questions relevant to low input, sustainable agriculture. Some of these funds will be provided to the University of Wisconsin via a specific cooperative agreement to help support an integrated cropping systems project. We will be developing research protocols in the next few months that address issues of sustainability, nutrient management, grazing, and cost of forage and milk production.

We are pleased and very proud of the way Center scientists from diverse disciplines interact and bring their collective insights to bear on the problems of forage production and utilization. This collection of research summaries illustrates the progress they are making in developing information to help dairy farmers utilize their resources more effectively. The research is intended to benefit producers of forage crops, dairy farmers and the consumers of dairy products.

Sincerely,

Larry D. Satter, Director
U.S. Dairy Forage Research Center