

# DAIRY PRODUCTION SYSTEMS THE MOOSLETTER



September 2007

## Heifer Haven Provides Homegrown Replacements

CEO David Sumrall recently announced a decision to expand the replacement program that supports all DPS locations. The new program which is already underway is a collaborative effort between the various locations of DPS farms and contract growers in the Southeast.

Dubbed "Heifer Haven", the newly-created entity will own and develop the young females from each of the operations that heretofore were sold at market prices to other growers in the Midwest. Under the former arrangement, DPS had the right but not the obligation to purchase those cattle as fully-developed replacements just prior to calving. Under the new arrangement, ownership will remain with Heifer Haven, and locations will be able to pur-

chase replacement animals at cost rather than at market prices.

"The changing dairy industry and the markets that are a part of that have forced us to look at our replacement program differently," Sumrall said. "At various times in the past, we have literally been able to buy replacement cattle at prices that were very near or even below what we could raise them ourselves for. That has not been the case for the last several years. Both milk and cattle have

become highly transportable, and competition for replacement cattle is extremely high. As a result, so are the prices," he said.

There were a couple of ways to approach the issue. "We could either invest the capital to build our own facility to take our young heifers all the way to their first calving, or we could outsource the



Weaned heifers at DPS - Bell enjoy the bright sunny day.

job. After weighing all the alternatives, I decided that outsourcing on a contract basis was best for us," Sumrall continued. "When I started this business, I made the fundamental decision that we were going to make producing large volumes of high quality milk our core competency. In my mind, developing top-notch replacements is a completely separate enterprise, requiring separate and equally superior management and attention to detail as that of the milk production operation. To me it was simply a matter of us maintaining our focus on that which the business was founded. I believe that the way we are approaching this program, we can have

(See "Heifer Haven" on page 2)

## Dr. McComb's Departure

Carrie Pedreiro

Dr. Tim McComb, DPS staff veterinarian, has been an integral part of improving the herd health program over the past year. Hired through the DPS internship program in July 2006, McComb joined the DPS team upon receipt of his Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree from Cornell University. Showing significant promise, he was promoted to staff veterinarian in early 2007.

After a successful year with DPS, Dr. McComb is resigning his position in mid-September in order



Dr. Tim McComb's last day with DPS is September 15.

to prepare for his upcoming marriage. He and his fiancée, Alejandra Renjifo, will wed at the end of September and relocate to North Carolina to where Alejandra will be continuing her advanced education.

"I can't say enough good things about my experience with DPS," said McComb. "This job has gone above and beyond what I expected and the reason why I'm successful is that the support system around me wanted me to be successful."

"Tim has been a huge asset to the DPS team and it will be hard to replace him not only because there is a shortage of dairy veterinarians in this country, but because Tim

fit so well within our organization," said Michael Pedreiro. "He will be greatly missed."

Dr. McComb is interested in pursuing an opportunity in a regulatory position, possibly with the USDA, and with a heavy swine population in North Carolina,

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# President's Ponderings



**David P. Sumrall**

No real American can think about the month of September in any fashion without mental flashes of the senseless horrific tragedy of 9-11-01 coming to mind. How things have changed since then.

Now seven years downstream, I think it is safe to say that things will never be the same again.

Perhaps they should not be. In one of the most despicable acts of American history, thousands of innocent people were lost. Families were shattered, and dreams were snuffed out like a candle. What a grim reminder of how precious and fragile life is, and how precious the freedom that so many people



have paid the ultimate price for since the inception of these United States really is. As I reflect on that, all I can say is God bless America. And may we all remember that this country we live in was founded as "one nation, under God."

As I pondered how things have changed since that fateful day, I realized that I like many other people have struggled (and continue to struggle) with many of the changes. Some of it is just related to the fact that I find it hard to believe that some of the hoops we have to jump through now just to move about this great land of ours are really going to prevent another tragedy. If I am totally honest, however, the bulk of the problem lies in the fact that I just don't like having change forced on me, sometimes even if it is for my own good.

The reality of the matter is that when I think reasonably about change, I come back to center, though. The fact is that life is constantly changing, and day-to-day events are dictating that we be in a current state of adaptation whether we like it or not. This is true in our personal lives as well as every other facet of our existence, including the workplace. Those events can range from tragic to wonderful and they may be completely out of our control or directly within our charge, or any combination of thereof. The trick is to figure out that how we react to change is what determines the impact that it will have on us.

I have talked a lot about change over the years. I do so firstly because I believe that change is unavoidable, and we might as well have a plan for how we will conduct ourselves when it happens to us. But beyond that, I believe that from an occupational point of

view, we must embrace change. After all, if I refuse to change, that means that I will never be any better at what I do than I am today. To get better, I must change.

I believe that we are at our best when we are striving for excellence. And that quest many times requires that we evaluate ourselves and our approach to something (or somebody) and often requires that we change something to achieve that excellent result. That applies to each of us individually as well as collectively in the case of our company.

Great athletic teams are constantly changing. Players come and go, but they all work hard to train for "game day". No team runs the same set of plays in every game. New plays are always being created. New approaches that all have the same goal. Scoring points and winning the game.

We need to keep the right focus on change. We need to recognize it when it appears, approach it with the desire to understand (even if we can't), and let our attitude toward the change be what defines us, rather than the change (event) itself. I am convinced that this is one of the character traits associated with those individuals or companies who achieve excellence. I want that trait to be in my personal "toolbox" as well as that of our company and all the teams that make it work. I hope you will join me in working toward the changes that excellence requires.

I will end where I started. God Bless America, and may we always remember. 🐾

## Heifer Haven

*(Continued from page 1)*

the best of both worlds," he concluded. "I want to make sure we keep our eye on the ball."

The contract growers are located in the Southeast, and heifers will be raised and developed on pasture. "I like the fact that when this program comes to fruition, our replacements will have been fully developed right here close to home. They will be fully acclimated to the conditions of the Southeast, and will not have to make what can be some pretty tough transitions at certain times of the year when they are coming to our hot, humid environment from points up north," Sumrall said.

This program is a long-term commitment. It will take eighteen months for the growing operation to reach full size, with the first cattle that entered the program returning to DPS farms in December, 2008. 🐾

# Protocol POP Quiz

By Dr. Tim McComb

- Where is the preferred choice for giving intramuscular (IM) injections?
  - The legs
  - The tail
  - The "triangle" of the neck
  - Never give IM injections
- How often should needles be changed when doing a series of vaccinations?
  - Every 10 animals
  - Between every animal
  - Between every pen of animals
  - Never change needles
- The maximum amount that should be administered for IM and SQ injections are \_\_\_ and \_\_\_ per site.
  - 15cc and 25cc
  - 25cc and 45cc
  - 3cc and 3cc
  - There is no limit
- Using the hips as an injection site is acceptable only when safety is a concern.

TRUE or FALSE

- Used needles should be disposed of in:
  - Your pocket
  - Back in the box
  - A sharp's container
  - The garbage



Answers on Page 4.

# Felino Joins Youngstock Focus

Carrie Pedreiro

Dairy Production Systems is proud to announce the recent hiring of Felino Velasquez as DPS Youngstock Manager.

Felino grew up in his native Philippines, where he studied veterinary science at De La Salle Araneta University. After graduation, Felino spent 10 years in the artificial insemination business working with both beef and dairy animals. Felino's family migrated to New Zealand where he studied secondary teaching during which time he held various jobs in hotels and factories.



Felino says adjusting to the Florida weather has been his biggest challenge so far. He adds the people are great that he is working with now.

by a friend, Felino began work at Alliance Dairy in Georgia as an artificial inseminator. After a year and a half, Felino's focus was placed on the farm's heifer operation. One year later, Felino's job duties expanded to include the calf operation. Felino remained the manager of the youngstock operation until his move to Dairy Production Systems in August 2007.

Felino hopes to duplicate the success he had with the youngstock program at his previous job here at DPS.

"I hope to make the youngstock department a profit center for DPS," Felino said.

Felino returned to his dairy career in 1999, when he came to America. Referred

Congratulations Felino, and welcome to the DPS team!



## Communication

Rick Hedrick

Communication is a great tool to ensure everyone's safety, improve working conditions, and help the team function more efficiently. Keep the following tips in mind:

⇒ The best ideas come from the people doing the job everyday. Communicate any of your ideas with your supervisor.

⇒ Communicate safety concerns with your supervisor so they can be addressed. Speak up if you see an unsafe condition.

⇒ There is a **Suggestion Box** at all locations. Submit your concerns, questions, or ideas anonymously at anytime using the suggestion box. There is always a way to communicate!



# Dr. Tim's Tip: Physical Exam

Dr. Tim McComb

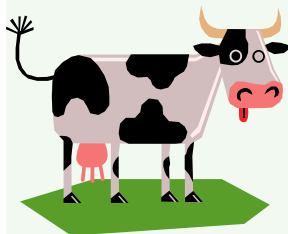
A full physical exam is a necessary procedure when evaluating individual animal health. Relying on shortcuts and assumptions will result with inaccurate treatment or missing a problem entirely, and either could result in the unnecessary loss of an animal.

A cow may show the same set of signs for a small variety of different reasons and the only way to narrow down the possibilities is to carefully evaluate each body system (heart, lungs, GI, reproductive, urinary, udder, etc.) until the problem is identified. For example, an animal that is identified as being off feed and depressed may have a DA, metritis, or toxic mastitis. The quickest way to find the right answer is a physical exam.

A common error is to stop the exam once a single problem has been found. However, all too frequently multiple problems are present at the same time. Since ketosis, displaced abomasums, and metritis have similar root causes, they often occur at the same time. Ending the exam before evaluating the uterus or checking the urine for ketones will make it more difficult for the cow to recover, prolonging her treatment period and negatively impacting her performance in the herd.

Something often left out of the full physical exam is taking a look at the past health history. It helps define chronic vs. acute problems and guides the treatment decisions being made. Starting the physical exam by observing from a distance can be critical, especially when evaluating a pen that is not locked up. Key health indicators that can be identified in this manner include manure quality, body condition, abdominal symmetry, posture, signs of uterine discharge appetite, attitude, hydration status, nasal discharge and respiratory pattern.

Once it has been determined that a full exam is necessary, some form of restraint will be necessary, by bringing the animal to a headlock or squeeze chute. When entire pens are being evaluated through the use of headlocks at the feedbunk it can be advantageous to work in teams. In this situation it is difficult for one person to perform the full physical exam alone, which means communication between herdsmen positioned behind and in front of the cows is essential. Between the two vantage points all aspects of a physical exam can be achieved.



Rick Hedrick

Attention to detail and following protocol will make or break our quality. It is everyone's responsibility to make sure we are doing everything possible to meet and exceed our goals. Simply put, not following protocol will not meet our quality goals.

## July Bonus Makers

Location	Bonus Achieved
DPS -	• Quality
Branford	• Herd Turnover
DPS -	• Herd Turnover
Georgia	
DPS -	• Herd Turnover
Mississippi	

# Celebrations

## September Anniversaries

**DPS - Headquarters**  
 Jamie Sumrall, 12 years  
 Susan Blount, 4 years

**DPS - Branford**  
 Maria Portillo, 3 years

**DPS - Georgia**  
 Timmy Jenkins, 2 years  
 Richard Morris, 3 years  
 Juan Soto, 7 years

## September Birthdays

**DPS - Bell**  
 23rd Juan Guzman

**DPS - Georgia**  
 3rd Julian Gaise  
 4th Jairo Chavez  
 11th Raul Villalobos  
 12th Warren Lawrence  
 13th Ayde Cruz  
 18th Antonio Garcia  
 19th Sylvestre Quintana  
 22nd Reynaldo Guzman  
 27th Christopher Escamilla

**DPS - Mississippi**  
 18th Francine Villega  
 24th Mel Nicholson

**DPS - Branford**  
 3rd Maria Salgado  
 6th James Ritchey  
 10th Ray Anthony  
 13th Amilcar Landaverde  
 29th Jose Arellanes



## August New Hires

**DPS - Bell**  
 Felino Velasquez

**DPS - Branford**  
 Ralph Willis

### McComb

*(Continued from page 1)*

McComb understands other aspects of his experience gained at DPS will carry into his next venture.

“It was real important for me to have a rapid education in the administrative side for my future endeavors,” said McComb. “By and large, I’ve learned that bugs don’t cause problems, but management slip-ups do, and realizing that is the best street education beyond what I learned in school.”

“The whole purpose of our internship program is to give participants the opportunity to experience first-hand the real world of the production dairy industry. Of course, we are always happy when it gives the intern the experience that we promised, but we hate to see them go as well,” remarked David Sumrall. “When it works as well as it has with Tim, we selfishly want to make them stay,” he mused, “but we are proud to have been a part of their preparation for the next step.”

Congratulations Dr. McComb and good luck in your next endeavor. 🐄

### Grandparents Day is September 9.

Happy Grandparent’s Day to all DPS employees who have grandchildren. Don’t forget your own grandparents on this special day!

## Protocol POP Quiz

**Answer Key:**  
 1. C, 2. B, 3. A, 4. TRUE, 5. C



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### OUR MISSION:

**“To provide an ATMOSPHERE and the RESOURCES to enable our PEOPLE and our COWS to be the leading, most efficient producer of MILK in the nation.”**

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