



For immediate release

CANWEST DHI (ONTARIO REGION) ANNUAL MEETING

The 31st Ontario Annual Meeting for DHI was held on Tuesday, January 10th, 2012 at the Fairmont Royal York Hotel in Toronto. The meeting was attended by approximately 120 people which included delegates, industry partners and staff.

Ed Friesen, Chair of the Board, reported on the many changes to the dairy industry in the past year – in particular the planned reduction of SCC penalty levels to 400,000. Besides the the regular SCC service, DHI continues to offer services such as the contagious mastitis tests that can provide what dairy producers need to meet the new quality challenges. Chairman Ed also commented on the partnerships formed over the past year – EastGen (Gencor and Eastern Breeders) and the many enhanced partnerships that are happening nationally in the milk marketing and animal improvement sectors. Chairman Ed also touched upon the major health and disease project that DHI and Dairy Farmers of Manitoba participated in this past fall. The project utilizes the bulk milk tank rather than an individual sample to improve and reduce the cost of disease testing. The project has gained much support and attention from the dairy industry.

Resolutions Chair, John McCallum (King City, ON) reported on the two resolutions received by the committee. One of the resolutions related to include Heifer Pregnancy Risk data on the Annual Reproduction Report. The second resolution dealt with DHI investigating the possible addition of blood analysis testing. Both resolutions were passed.

The corporation had a positive fiscal year and General Manager, Neil Petreny provided highlights of 2011 operations and plans for the upcoming year. DHI achieved or exceeded three of the goals for 2011 – increased Market Share, Dairy Comp and Mastitis Testing. The introduction of BVD testing was delayed in order to re-run a field trial. The trial results did not change and the test is now available in Ontario. General Manger, Neil Petreny announced that Premise ID numbers are now printed on all herds reports in support of the National Dairy Traceability Program. He also spoke on the Ketosis Testing Service offered by Valacta and that DHI should have this available within the next 12-18 months. Looking ahead, growing the use of DHI, Dairy Comp and BVD testing and introducing the FeedWatch management software are all initiatives for 2012. Special mention was given to long-time service employees Miranda Chow (Cambridge, ON), Gayl Nelson (Baltimore, ON) and Chris Stamp (Peterborough, ON) who recently retired. Mention was also made regarding Zone 1 Director, Lyle Martin (Brussels, ON) and his fight with cancer.

Dr. Herman Barkema, Professor in Epidemiology of Infectious Diseases at the University of Calgary, was the guest speaker for the afternoon session. Dr. Barkema gave an informative and entertaining presentation on the value of health and disease testing of milk. His presentation dealt with the many health issues/diseases that may occur in herds today and possible solutions to provide assistance in the controlling of these diseases. In summary, Dr. Barkema noted that there needs to be coordination between health prevention and health programs; provincial dairy organizations need to work with each other; DHI organizations need to talk with other DHI organizations, government and advising organizations. We should not wait for others to lead these initiatives but to initiate changes ourselves.

- 30 -

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