



## **Animal Science and Dairy Management**

*An education you can use.....*

### ***SUNY Morrisville Animal Science and Dairy Management Program***

Change is inevitable in the dairy industry, and new technologies, advances in herd and business management, and increasing farm efficiency and profitability have put the industry on the cutting edge. These developments bring challenges that tomorrow's industry leaders must be prepared to face. The SUNY Morrisville Dairy Management Program is committed to the future of the dairy industry.

The Dairy Management Program applies basic concepts in animal husbandry, crop production, and business management to real-life situations. Through classes, lectures, numerous field trips, laboratory exercises, total farm analysis projects, and interaction with industry leaders and faculty members, students learn how good management decisions can lead to profitable dairying. Most important, the program demonstrates that education in the ever-changing dairy industry continues beyond the SUNY Morrisville experience.

Students in the Dairy Management program visit, analyze, and evaluate progressive dairy farms and agri-service operations and attend a variety of university/extension and industry-sponsored conferences. They interact with leading industry representatives and teaching, research, and extension personnel. Throughout these activities, the Dairy Management Program challenges students to focus on personal and career development, achieving personal and career objectives, and the opportunity to challenge and directly apply concepts learned in class and work experiences to the dairy industry. The contributions from northeastern dairy producers and associated

industries are largely responsible for the programs success.

The Dairy Management Program emphasizes flexibility in course selection. Program flexibility is a unique characteristic of SUNY Morrisville. More than two-thirds of course selections can be electives, allowing students to tailor their education to their specific interest, individual development, and career goals. To assure a well-rounded education suited to individual needs, dairy management students choose a mix of basic, particle, and highly specialized courses. In many classes, students apply the principles of dairy management to particular learning situations.

The Dairy Management Program offers a range of courses students can select from:

#### **Dairy Management**

- Applied cattle nutrition
- Dairy Breeding and Reproduction
- Dairy cattle production and management
- Dairy herd health
- Dairy herd management
- Dairy production seminar

#### **Farm and Business Management**

- Business management
- Computer applications
- Farm analysis and decision making
- Farm business management
- Farm finance
- Financial management
- Human resource management

#### **Crop Production**

- Forage crops
- Grain crops
- Soils and GPS Technology
- Weed science
- Pasture Management

## S.H.A.R.P. (Student Heifer Applied Raising Program)

Today's students in dairy production need background and training that will allow them to be competitive and successful in the dairy industry. On a positive note, many career opportunities exist with progressive farm businesses and agriservice for qualified young people. Hence, the emphasis is to recruit and provide education and training to fill these career opportunities.

Many of our young people possess the enthusiasm and desire to learn. Academic settings that provide a combination of classroom instruction, reinforced by practical laboratories, supplemented with hands-on experience create the ultimate learning environment. SUNY Morrisville recognizes the importance of this approach and has been steering the Animal Science and Dairy program in that direction.

One endeavor that directly involves the students in a component of a dairy farm business is S.H.A.R.R.P. This is an acronym for the Student's Heifer, Applied Research and Raising Program. The concept was first proposed by a former student, Melvin Phelps, who was also an FFA member in the Carthage School district. He was instrumental in creating the initial framework that was a project in a Dairy Management course.

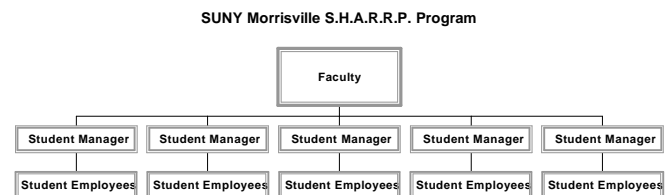
Through course work at SUNY Morrisville, the students learn that the cost of raising replacement heifers may reach nearly 20 percent of the variable operating costs on dairy farm businesses in the Northeast. Since heifer replacements are viewed as liabilities on many dairy farm businesses, they receive less attention, perhaps inferior quality rations, and substandard facilities. The results are heifers that enter the milking string at a less than optimal body weight resulting in lower milk production potential.

Since the heifer enterprise is a weaker link on many farm businesses, it is important to address heifer-raising management as part of their academic training. The primary objective of the program is to provide structure where the dairy students manage the day-to-day activities associated with SUNY Morrisville's heifer replacement program. This includes feeding to estrus detection to trouble-shooting and making

decisions that the students are directly responsible for.

Within the program the students are responsible for the newborn to weaning calves that are housed in a calf greenhouse, post weaning to 5 months, also housed in a greenhouse barn, and the rest of the replacements that are housed in bedded packs and loose-housing structures.

The uniqueness of the program exists with the management structure highlighted in the chart below. The general managers act as



resources and provide guidance and supervision for the program. The student managers apply and interview for the position. They are selected through the interview process based on their commitment, attitude, technical abilities and ability to provide leadership. The student managers oversee the four to six student employees in each group. The student employees work with the managers on a rotational basis to do all of the chores and associated management activities related to the heifer replacement program at SUNY Morrisville.

In addition to gaining hands-on experience, it is a character building and personal development exercise in disguise. Not only to the managers have to oversee the heifer enterprise itself, but they need to be people managers as well. The managers create rotation schedules for the student employees and deal with student employee personnel challenges. Essentially, it is very similar to what dairy managers struggle in the "real world".

The SHARRP program began in the Spring of 1997 and is proving to be a very valuable part of the students education. Not only does it instill responsibility and cooperation in a teamwork environment, but incorporates "real life" learning and management experiences that students can take with them as they further their education or enter the working world.

## Faculty

Dairy Management and support faculty members teach in-depth courses and are up-to-date on current research with dairy producers and agribusiness. Students are exposed to current information and research. The faculty interacts with students not only in the classroom but also in laboratory sessions, seminars, clubs, and informal settings. Students choose faculty advisers according to their individual interests. Many faculty members also serve as club advisers, which contributes to the personal nature of the Dairy Management Program.

## Student Activities

### Dairy Cattle Judging Team

The SUNY Morrisville dairy cattle judging team has a winning tradition. Students on the team learn dairy cattle judging and represent SUNY Morrisville in postsecondary and collegiate judging events. All interested students can learn about judging dairy cattle as the team is chosen. Students trying out for the four-member team compete in various judging activities. Students learn about judging different dairy breeds and work with successful dairy cattle breeders.

### Dairy Club

The SUNY Morrisville Dairy Club is open to anyone interested in dairy cattle and the dairy industry. The Dairy Club is a great place to meet and interact with other students, faculty, and industry representatives from across the Northeast.

Club members participate in learning, leadership, and social activities. There are spring and fall trips to and other s and the Dairy Club sponsors and hosts the Autumn Review Sale. Both learning experiences help develop a strong camaraderie in Dairy Club and the Dairy Management Program.

## Career Development

SUNY Morrisville offers career guidance through individual counseling, career workshops, on-campus interviews, summer programs, and internships. Faculty advisers and staff in the college's transfer and placement office are always available to give students assistance and direction.

Employment opportunities for SUNY Morrisville dairy management students are numerous. Many of the recent graduates have gone into dairy production, and the others have found employment in sales and services industries related to dairy cattle nutrition, animal health, and dairy construction and equipment. Other popular areas include financial management, artificial insemination, agricultural journalism, and agriculture education.

Several students choose to continue their education by transferring to four-year universities. Research opportunities for transfer students in dairy management and related fields (nutrition, reproduction, milking management, genetics, physiology, and others) are numerous and can lead to rewarding careers.

Because so many employment opportunities exist, the need for highly qualified students continues to increase. Just as the dairy industry is growing and changing, so is the knowledge needed by dairy producers to remain profitable. Both dairy managers and those who provide support services must have the training and information needed to deal with the challenges of the future.

## Take a Close Look

Prospective students are encouraged to visit the SUNY Morrisville campus. Group conferences, visits with students and faculty, and tours are available to introduce you to the college. We encourage you to take a close look at SUNY Morrisville's Animal Science and Dairy Management programs. For more information about the college, write to:

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*SUNY Morrisville offers challenging classes combined with hands on experience which has broaden my view of the Dairy Industry. Being on the Judging Team has allowed me to build strong leadership and communication skills.*

Jim Canary, '97, Agricultural Science, Dairy.  
St. Johnsville, NY

*Other former and present students will contribute to testimonials*