

The Importance of Case Studies in Training Dairy Science Students

Tim Mutsvangwa and Matt Walpole
Department of Animal and Poultry Science

Objectives of Dairy Cattle Management Course

- For students to acquire the research-based knowledge and skills that are needed to work with dairy cattle
- For students to be able to apply their knowledge and skills in a practical situation for the efficient management of a dairy farm
 - Laboratories + case studies

Why Are Case Studies Important?

- Case studies bring things to life by allowing students to apply their knowledge and skills to a real world dairy farm
- Students find that the real world is more engaging than classroom theory
- Case studies are a good way of students (future professionals) to learn how to engage with dairy producers

How Do The Case Studies Work?

- Identify 2 dairy producers willing to participate
- Course instructor, TA pay initial visit to the dairy farm (1-2 hr.)
 - Collect production and farm management data (DHI records, TMR formulations etc.)
- ALL INFORMATION COLLECTED IS CONFIDENTIAL
- Information made available to students as handout that will be returned and shredded

How Do The Case Studies Work?

- Visit by course instructor, TA, and students (30-40 in number; working in groups of 4-5)
- ~45-60 min of self-guided tour of farm in groups (main barn, calf-rearing facilities, silage bunks etc.)
- ~30 min question period with the producer

How Do The Case Studies Work?

- Group presentations in class on farm analysis, recommendations, implementation plan, and monitoring
- Presentations evaluated by 4-5 judges
 - 20% of final grade
- Course instructor, TA summarize students' analysis and recommendations and present to the dairy producer in follow-up visit

Who Benefits From Case Studies?

- The U of S through enhancement of dairy management course; facilitates outreach
- The students by gaining practical knowledge on dairy farming
- The participating dairy producers through the comprehensive recommendations that are made
- The dairy industry as future professionals are more knowledgeable, more experienced, and better prepared to work with dairy producers

My Contact Details

- Tim Mutsvangwa, Department of Animal and Poultry Science, University of Saskatchewan
 - Telephone: 306-966-1695
 - E-mail: Tim.mutsvan@usask.ca
- Also in Dairy Info Day Proceedings