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Study To Address Declining Dairy Industry In Southeastern Region (/full-blog/2013/07/study-to-address-declining-dairy.html)



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By Megan Crenshaw, Staff Member

The Southeastern dairy industry seems to be in big trouble. While the nation is experiencing a surge in dairy and milk demand, the Southeastern dairy industry has experienced a greater than 37 percent decline in total production of milk.[1] (http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#_edn1) Since 1995 more than two-thirds of the dairies in the Southeast have closed.[2] (http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#_edn2) A six-state study is in the works to reverse this trend.[3] (http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#_edn3) The main focus of the study is to “pinpoint the causes of the decline in the Southeastern U.S. dairy industry.”[4] (http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#_edn4) The United States Department of Agriculture’s National Institute of Food and Agriculture will fund the study for five years with a \$3 million grant.[5] (http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#_edn5) The University of Tennessee’s Institute Of Agriculture is the lead institution for the study.[6] (http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#_edn6) “Regional participants in the study include the University of Florida, University of Georgia, University of Kentucky, Mississippi State University and Virginia Tech.”[7] (http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#_edn7) A scientist in each participating state will oversee the state’s outreach and research efforts.[8]

Researchers seek to reach out to struggling dairies that are underperforming in hopes to enhance regional milk production and improve milk quality. [9] (http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#_edn9) “The assistant dean of the University of Tennessee explained that the study will focus on improving herd health and milk quality and quantity by lowering the incidence of mastitis.”[10] (http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#_edn10) One of the central concerns surrounding low milk quality in the southeastern regions is the high level of mastitis.[11] (http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#_edn11)

“Mastitis is the inflammation of the mammary gland and udder tissue.”[12] (http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#_edn12) It has been categorized as a “major endemic disease of dairy cattle.”[13] (http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#_edn13) The illness is a very complex disease.[14] (http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#_edn14) Typically it occurs as an “immune response to bacterial invasion of the teat canal by a variety of bacterial sources present on the farm.”[15] (http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#_edn15) It can also occur as a “result of chemical, mechanical, or thermal injury to the cow’s udder.”[16] (http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#_edn16) “Practices such as close attention to milking hygiene, the culling of chronically-infected cows, good housing management and effective dairy cattle nutrition to promote good cow health are essential in helping to control herd mastitis levels.”[17] (http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#_edn17)

Researchers will work to identify factors that affect regional farmer’s inability to adopt practices to control mastitis.[18] (http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#_edn18) They will conduct research aimed at strategies to solve this issue and work to develop continuing education programs for those working within the dairy industry.[19] (http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#_edn19) Researchers are hopeful that this study will result in an “implementation of cost effective, science-based mastitis prevention and control strategies” that can help producers “improve quality milk, increase production and therefore improve industry profitability and sustainability.”[20] (http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#_edn20)

[1] (http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#_ednref1) Aimee Nielson, Kentucky Dairy Farmers to Benefit from New Six-State Study on Southeast Milk Decline, *KyForward* (July 1, 2013), <http://www.kyforward.com/2013/07/kentucky-dairy-farmers-to-benefit-from-new-six-state-study-on-southeast-milk-decline/>.

[2] (http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#_ednref2) Tim Lundeen, Program to Aid Southeastern Dairies Through Herd Health, Milk Quality, *Feedstuffs* (June 21, 2013), <http://feedstuffs.com/story-program-aid-southeastern-dairies-through-herd-health-milk-quality-45-99532>.

[3] (http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#_ednref3) *Id.*

[4] (http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#_ednref4) UT Heading Dairy Study In Southeast, *News Channel 5* (June 20, 2013 1:39 PM), <http://www.newschannel5.com/story/22645402/ut-heading-dairy-study-in-southeast>.

[5] (http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#_ednref5) *Id.*

[6] (http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#_ednref6) *Id.*

[7] (http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#_ednref7) *Id.*

[8] (http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#_ednref8) Patricia McDaniels, Saving Southeastern Dairies Through Improved Herd Health, Milk Quality, *UT Institute of Agriculture* (June 19, 2013) <https://ag.tennessee.edu/news/Pages/NR-2013-06-MilkQualityGrant.aspx>.

[9] (http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#_ednref9) Nielson, *supra* note 1.

[10] (http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#_ednref10) *Id.*

[11] (http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#_ednref11) *Id.*

[12] (http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#_ednref12) Mastitis in Dairy Cows, *DAIRYCO.ORG*, <http://www.dairyco.org.uk/technical-information/animal-health-welfare/mastitis/> (last visited July 4, 2013).

[13] (http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#_ednref13) *Id.*

[14] (http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#_ednref14) *Id.*

[15] (http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#_ednref15) *Id.*

[16] (http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#_ednref16) *Id.*

[17] (http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#_ednref17) *Id.*

[18] (http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#_ednref18) Nielson, *supra* note 1.

[19] (http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=4202935745006855383%_edirect%3Fid).

[20] (http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=4202935745006855383%_edirect%3Fid) McDaniel, supra note 8.

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