Integrated Nutrient Management Program Work Group
Minutes November 17, 2003

Attending: Quirine Ketterings, Karl Czymmek, Caroline Rasmussen, Greg Albrecht, Harold VanEs, Danny Fox, Keith Porter, Cameron Gourley, Brian Aldrich, Dick Dale, Mary Jane Porter, Jason Kahabka, Timothy Dittrich.

Dr. Cameron Gourley, Senior Research Scientist, Soils & Land Management, Project Manager, Resilient Dairy Systems, Ellinbank Research Institute, Australia, will present: "Are grazed dairy systems a sustainable alternative, or is the 'grass always greener? : An Australian Perspective."

Australian Dairy Industry

- Dairy is important industry to Australia. Australian cows produce 2% of world’s milk but Australian exports account for 12% world dairy product market. Important export product for Australia ($ 2.6 billion/year). Low cost of production: 13 cents/liter AU vs. 25 cents/liter US. (For the metric challenged that’s about $ 5.90 /cwt and $ 11.35 /cwt, respectively.)
- Dairy Farms are pasture based year – round. Pastures are rye, white clover and mixed native grasses and weeds. Move to confinement was limited by recent poor world wide milk prices.
- There is surplus pasture in spring which is made into large baled hay or silage. No barns for animal. Farms are very labor efficient. Recently they have had an increase in use of fertilizer and off-farm feed purchases.

Research Priorities

- Phosphorus for Dairy Farms – 22 people; industry (farmer) support. Extensive outreach: 3000 dairy farmers and others received quarterly newsletter. Repeated “road show” for 36 lunch and evening sessions.
- Nutrient loss on Grazing Farms: distribution of nutrients a problem – loafing, watering areas.
- Farmers are more likely to adopt nutrient management if presented with cow health impact of high K.
- Fertilizer is small % farm expenses.
- Pressure is coming from Dairy Product Companies. There are five major buyers of milk in AU. They are setting standards for the farmers. The companies want to maintain AU image as “clean & green”. NZ, one milk buyer, is setting 7 year plan that includes farm best management practices such as animal welfare and nutrient management. Problem is compliance verification.

Next meetings:


December 19th, 2003 - Amanda Barber from the Cortland County Soil and Water Conservation District will lead a discussion of "Nitrate in groundwater in Cortland County - Is there a problem and who's going to solve it?" 133 Emerson Hall, 12:00 – 1:30. Lunch provided at 12:00.