

# Idaho Dairy Focus

December 2017



**IDAHO IDA**  
dairymen's association

Protecting Idaho's dairy industry  
through environmental, legal, and  
legislative leadership since 1924.

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

- 02** IDA Consulting: A Two-Year Reflection
- 04** Idaho Dairymen's Association 2017 Advocate of the Year
- 05** Federal Dairy Issues Update
- 07** The Month Barrels Said to Blocks, "Hold My Beer and Watch This"
- 09** CAFE
- 11** IDA District Meetings 2018 Information
- 12** Planning the Budget for Next Year
- 13** Phosphorus Indexing: A Director's Perspective



## IDA CONSULTING: A TWO-YEAR REFLECTION

*By Rick Naerebout, Chief Executive Officer of the Idaho Dairymen's Association*

It is the holiday season when we all gather with family and friends to celebrate, reflect, and contemplate the year to come. It seemed an appropriate opportunity to reflect on some of the changes within the Idaho Dairymen's Association over the past two years. IDA's Board of Directors put into motion some major changes within the Association beginning in the summer of 2015. It was becoming obvious that regulatory and consumer expectations of Idaho's dairymen were increasing at an accelerating rate and at IDA, we wanted to find a way to come beside dairymen to provide the resources and expertise to assist our Members in meeting those expectations. This dialog within our Boardroom in early 2015 was the genesis of IDA Consulting Services, Inc.

IDA Consulting is a division within IDA, is solely owned by IDA, and the IDA Board of Directors provides oversight for all its activities, just like they do for IDA and IDEAL. It was created to be a resource for Idaho's dairymen and provide expertise on specific areas of focus. The initial focus was surrounding environmental expectations and needs. During 2017, we have expanded the focus to include worker training and safety. Within both arenas, we have been successful at creating solutions for the on-the-farm expectations our Members face, while not putting unreasonable burdens on them.

Environmental services provided by IDA Consulting include Nutrient Management Plan (NMP) writing, environmental assessments, Public Water System (PWS) regulatory compliance assistance, and one of the unforeseen but maybe most beneficial, in-house

expertise. Dr. Stephanie Kulesza was the first hire within IDA Consulting and she now has been joined by Megan Satterwhite, MS, to assist with writing NMPs and PWS compliance. All Idaho dairymen are required to have a current NMP (updated every 5 years) with the Idaho State Department of Agriculture (ISDA), and IDA Consulting has grown to occupy roughly 20% of that NMP writing business. PWS regulations only impact dairies with 25 or more employees and are regulated by the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality.

This past year we endeavored to update the Nutrient Management Standards that are used to regulate Idaho's dairy facilities. IDA Consulting staff helped facilitate this effort and utilized the expertise of the USDA Ag Research Service staff in Kimberly. Existing standards in surrounding states and other major dairy producing states were examined and a system called phosphorus indexing was agreed upon as the best new standard for Idaho. Each state's soil types, climate, and geography are different. So, we were unable to utilize an existing state's standard as Idaho's standard, but those other systems certainly provided a good roadmap for creating Idaho's standard. USDA-ARS staffs' expertise was paramount to the process in making sure that the new standard was scientifically and environmentally sound.

Once the standard was created, IDA petitioned ISDA to amend the Idaho Dairy Environmental Control Act (DECA) so it could be incorporated into the rules used by the Department to regulate Idaho dairies. We successfully completed that rulemaking this summer

and the Department will present the new rule to the Idaho legislature this session for approval. If approved, the new standard would be incorporated into the DECA rules with a five-year phase in. The five-year phase in allows dairymen to choose during that period of time which standard they prefer, the existing standard or the new indexing standard. Those involved in the negotiated rulemaking wished to minimize any potential financial harm on Idaho dairymen and a five-year window was agreed upon as a means to help accomplish that. The new standard does require some additional time to evaluate all the fields within the NMP, but we don't expect that increased time to translate into any significant expense. We are committed to maintaining the current fees charged to IDA Consulting clients for NMP writing services with the new standards.

We view this new phosphorus indexing standard as a win-win for Idaho. It provides the environmental protection dairy consumers expect and gives dairymen the flexibility needed to manage their operations. The use of BMPs to minimize the loss of phosphorus to the environment are a key component of the standard, and dairymen are rewarded within the standard if they implement BMPs. We hope many of you can join us at our winter District Meetings this January and February, as much of that program is dedicated to explaining the new standard and helping dairymen understand how it would work within their operation. You can find more on those dates, locations and times on page 11. If you have any questions on environmental services offered by IDA Consulting, please reach out to Dr. Steph. She can be reached at 208-358-4005 or [steph@idahodairymens.org](mailto:steph@idahodairymens.org).

Turning our attention to dairy worker training and safety, IDA Consulting also undertook creating a new program focused on providing a safer worker and work environment on Idaho's dairy facilities. Concerns surrounding worker training and safety have been enhanced over the past couple years with the increased publicity surrounding worker injuries and fatalities on dairies. We have worked in partnership with Idaho's processors in creating a program to address the concerns being expressed by customers and consumers of dairy. This partnership is unique in that Idaho's processors are stepping to the plate and partnering in covering program costs as well as assisting with development. It was clear that if we did not create a standard to be utilized, one would be created for us by individuals that really don't understand what happens on a daily basis on our dairy facilities.

We have employed the expertise of Dr. Douphrate from the University of Texas School of Public Health and

Dr. Hagevoort, a Dairy Extension Specialist from New Mexico State University in developing Idaho's Dairy Worker Training and Safety Program. To-date, this program has three major offerings: worker training translated to your worker's native language and delivered on iPads, in-pen safe animal handling trainings, and site evaluations to help identify potential safety hazards. The overall goal is increasing the safety of the worker through trainings and increasing the safety of the workplace through the elimination of safety hazards.

So far, the trainings have been well received by all the dairymen and dairy workers that have participated. It provides dairymen the opportunity to increase the culture of safety on their dairy operations and the employees truly appreciate the investment being made in them, not just as an employee but also to help better them individually. We provide diplomas at the completion of the trainings and just watching the employees receive those diplomas is all that is needed to understand the importance the training is to them. We have also shared the program with a major US retailer and received a very favorable response. I don't think we could ask for more than having dairymen and retailers both liking a program we have developed to address a need within our supply chain.

The program is being designed to be ongoing, with training offerings on job specific areas of the dairy in the coming months and years. The current worker training delivered on the iPads is a great overview of general safety on the dairy. Safe feeding and safe maternity trainings will be available in early/mid-2018. Ryan DeWit, MB has been hired within IDA Consulting to head up the program and is available to conduct trainings on IDA member dairies at no cost. Ryan can be reached at 806-265-5390 or [ryan@idahodairymens.org](mailto:ryan@idahodairymens.org). More information on the worker training program will also be available at IDA's District meeting in January and February.

Overall, we have been very fortunate to assemble the talent we have within IDA Consulting. The staff all have a passion to help better Idaho's dairy industry and that comes out in the work they do on behalf of the industry every day. We are very blessed to have a Board of Directors that is dedicated to serving the industry and approach their responsibilities with an open mind. Without their leadership and willingness to be proactive, we would not be in the positive position we are. It has been a great couple years here at IDA and we are looking forward to many more. We hope you all have an enjoyable holiday season with family and friends and are blessed in the coming year.



## IDAHO DAIRYMEN'S ASSOCIATION 2017 ADVOCATE OF THE YEAR

**B**ob Naerebout and the Idaho Dairyman's Association were recognized in October by the Community Council of Idaho 2017 as their Advocate of the Year at the "Noche de Exitos" gala in Caldwell. The event raised roughly \$25,000 for their new program created to provide legal services to immigrant families.

The Council's communication specialist Sonny Alvarez said in an Idaho Press Tribune article about the award that they selected Naerebout because of his extensive advocacy for immigration reform and his dedication to the rural Hispanic community they serve. "He's very present in the (Hispanic) community and he's doing a good job at it," said Alvarez.

Bob felt that while such an award was humbling, he really viewed it as an award for the Idaho dairy industry as a whole, stating "It is through and by the direction of the IDA dairy producer board that I have the privilege of advocating for the Latino community".

Bob covers government affairs for the Idaho Dairyman's Association both in Boise and Washington, D.C. In that capacity, Bob serves on several boards related to immigration reform. Those include the National Immigration Forum, the Agriculture Coalition for Immigration Reform, the National Milk Producers Federation's Immigration Task Force and the University of Idaho's Latino Advisory Committee.

It is not difficult for the Idaho Dairyman's Association to be advocates for our Foreign-Born Labor, whether it's our

Hispanic community or the Refugee community. Without those labor sources, the dairy industry in Idaho would not exist. The issue, for IDA, goes beyond the economic factors. It forces the dairy industry, rural communities, and the state to come to grips with the moral issues surrounding the lack of our nation's ability to address immigration reform.

To view the Idaho Press Tribune article go to:

[https://www.idahopress.com/news/local/2cscoop/idaho-dairyman-named-advocate-of-the-year-at-community-council/article\\_41b0e0ff-4e81-5599-ab5a-943eabd368bf.html](https://www.idahopress.com/news/local/2cscoop/idaho-dairyman-named-advocate-of-the-year-at-community-council/article_41b0e0ff-4e81-5599-ab5a-943eabd368bf.html)

The Community Council of Idaho, Inc. (CC Idaho) is a rural-centered, multi-service, non-profit organization that has impacted Idaho communities since 1971. They are the largest nonprofit serving Latinos in the state. Their purpose is to improve the social and economic status of local communities through workforce preparation, education, cultural awareness, civil rights advocacy, and well-being services.

CC Idaho has 10 Migrant and Seasonal Head Start centers throughout southern Idaho that offer full-day bilingual education, parent education, and comprehensive health, nutrition, and disability services. Their Employment and Training program helps farmworkers and low-income individuals increase their trade and professional skills at each of our five community resource centers.

## FEDERAL DAIRY ISSUES UPDATE

By Charlie Garrison

The first session of the 115th Congress is just about ready for the history books and, like in so many years, the final month saw the most action in Washington, D.C. Republican leaders in the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives got their tax reform bill across the finish line and on the President's desk. They also passed legislation to keep the federal government funded into January, avoiding a shutdown of non-essential agency services that would have begun at midnight on Friday, December 22nd.

The tax reform bill is the first significant reform of the federal code since 1986. IDA has been working closely with the Idaho congressional delegation all year on proposals that would have affected dairy farmers and others in our industry. That work paid off as we had solid support from the delegation for our priority issues.

One of the biggest victories for agriculture on tax reform is, frankly, something that we were able to convince the Congress to leave alone. Early proposals for tax reform included restricting the use of cash accounting by farming operations organized as corporations. IDA was part of a successful, broad industry effort to educate the Congress about the importance of cash accounting in balancing out the good years and the bad.

**"IDA was part of a successful, broad industry effort to educate the Congress about the importance of cash accounting in balancing out the good years and the bad."**

Taking a look at what is in the bill that will affect Idaho's dairy producers, the corporate tax rate is permanently reduced from 35% to 21%. "Pass-through" corporations will be eligible for a deduction of 20% of business income.

Section 179 expensing of business equipment purchases up to \$1 million is also in the bill. Bonus depreciation is included for five years, then phases out 20% each year for five years after that. The deductibility of business interest is maintained for operations with up to \$25 million in average annual revenue. Businesses with more than that in annual revenue will be able to use a depreciation table for assets less than 10 years old.

The deductibility of home mortgage interest is capped at \$750,000 of debt, down from the \$1 million cap in

current law. State and local income, property, and sales taxes will be deductible up to a total of \$10,000 each year. The Estate Tax exemption amount is doubled to \$22 million for a married couple. Like-kind or "1031 Exchanges" are limited to real property only – meaning land and buildings. The Section 199 production expenses deduction was eliminated but farmers will be able to take a deduction of 20% of payments from cooperatives from their taxable income.

Our work on passing federal legislation to address the ag labor crisis continues. There simply is no higher priority for the dairy industry than seeing Congress pass a bill and the President sign it into law to provide farmers with access to a legal and stable workforce. IDA joins in thanking the Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee Bob Goodlatte (R-VA) for his work to get a bill approved by his committee. While the bill needs improvement, the committee vote is a positive first step.

IDA will keep working on this legislation in the new year. Many members of Congress have said legislation to allow young adults who were brought here illegally as children to stay in the U.S. is a top priority. Others want to see improved border security and internal enforcement. One possible component of internal enforcement is requiring businesses to use the E-Verify program to screen new hires for work authorization. IDA joins the vast majority of farm groups in opposing attempts to require the use of E-Verify until an effective visa program for farmworkers has been enacted by Congress and implemented by the federal agencies tasked with the job.

Another issue of concern to dairy producers is rulemaking at EPA that would require some livestock operations to report air emissions to local emergency first responders. This rule would amount to additional paperwork for owners of many dairy operations in Idaho and require first responders to process information they say they don't need. At this time that rule has been placed on hold by the courts, so there is no need for anyone to file an air emissions report.

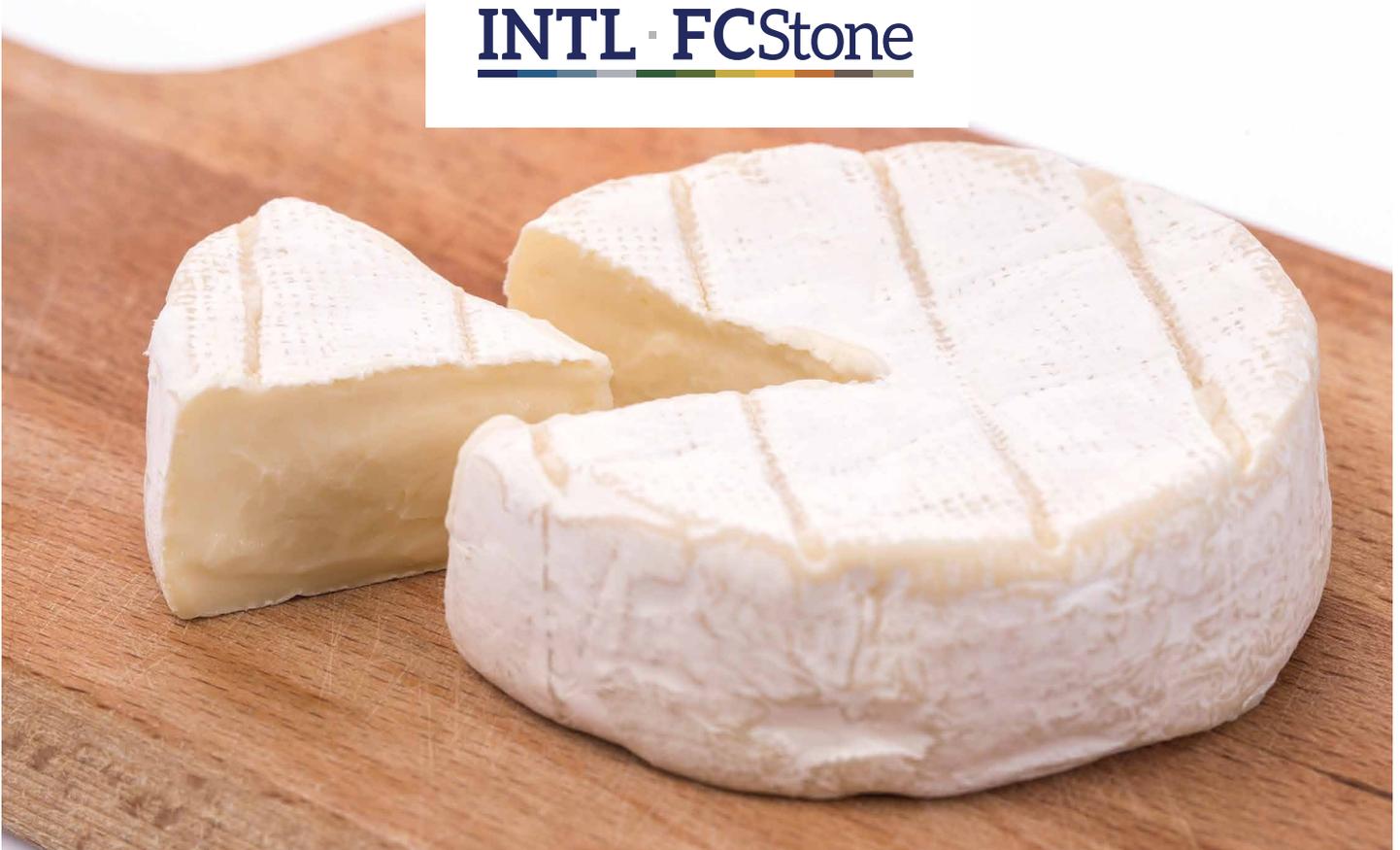
IDA will keep you posted of further developments on this potential new reporting requirement.

As is always the case, the start of every year brings us new challenges and opportunities. Understanding all that is in the new tax law will certainly be a challenge. IDA will pass along helpful information as it becomes available but, as always, each member is encouraged to consult your tax advisor to determine how the law affects you and your business.

The air emissions reporting rule remains in flux right now and IDA will keep working to try to have this potential new requirement eliminated. Congress may need to step in to direct the EPA to develop air emissions reporting rules that help first responders better assist people rather than spend time processing unhelpful reports.

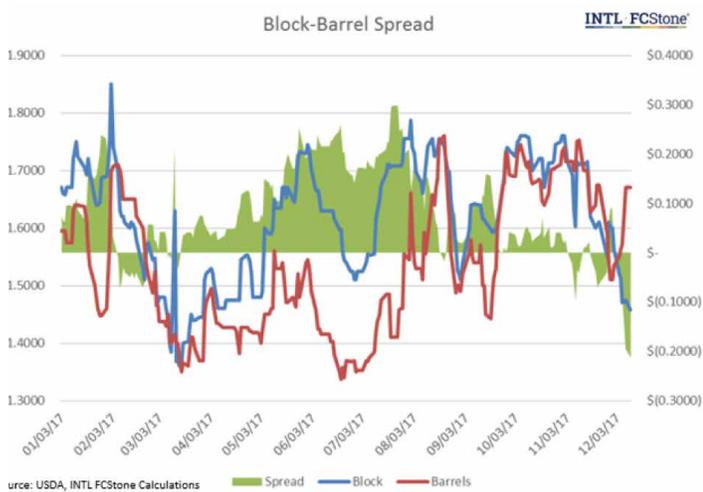
Access to workers will remain IDA's top priority in 2018. The future of our industry and the future economic health of rural areas in Idaho depend on the Congress fixing the ag labor crisis.





## THE MONTH BARRELS SAID TO BLOCKS, "HOLD BY BEER & WATCH THIS"

By James Carr and Dave Kurzawski,  
INTL FCStone Financial Inc – FCM division  
Written December 14th, 2017



Just when you thought it would be a quiet month to close out a somewhat strange year, we get a record 20+ cent block/barrel spread. The other way.

We've come a long way since July when the block traded near 30 cents premium to barrels. And it's not terribly unusual for the price of barrels to trade at a premium to blocks for short periods of time – particularly the summer months when grilling season is in full swing and barrel demand is most strong. But in December? During block demand season?

Actually, yes.

Over the past 10 years, the price of barrels has exceeded that of blocks five times during the month of December.

- **December 2015** - 11 of 22 sessions with barrels ranging 1.00 to 4.00 cents above blocks.
- **December 2011** - 2 of 21 sessions with barrels 1.75 cents above blocks.
- **December 2010** - 9 of 22 sessions with barrels ranging from 0.75 to 7.25 cents above blocks.
- **December 2008** - 11 of 21 sessions with barrels ranging from 1.00 to 8.00 cents above blocks.
- **December 2007** - 6 of 18 sessions with barrels ranging from 0.75 to 15.50 cents above blocks.

What's driving the spread today? There is hardly ever just one reason, so we'll touch on a few that we see.

First up is mozzarella cheese production. We all talk about viewing/eating/political changes around the National Football League, but the fact remains we're making less Mozzarella than normal. The 10-year compound annual growth rate is 2.7 percent. YTD US Mozzarella production is up 1.2% for 2017 adjusted for leap year. Where is that Mozzarella-milk going? Primarily other Italian cheese types and cheddar. But not just cheddar – cheddar blocks.

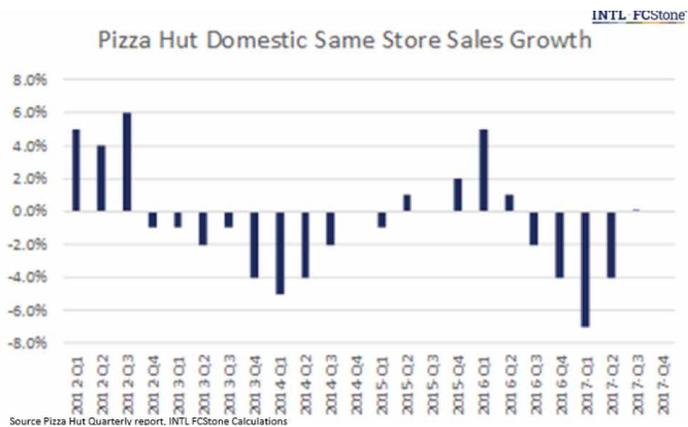
Quickly looking at same-store sales out of the major pizza chains in the US we see negative growth for 2017 with Pizza Hut showing flat growth during Q3 quarter which helps to explain the shortfall in Mozzarella demand.

Second, according to the American Trucking Association shortages of drivers around the country have sent trucking prices up anywhere between 7-15 percent this year alone, with shortages expected to be near 100,000 by January 2018. What does this have to do with the price of barrels in Chicago?

Idaho is the third largest cheese producing state behind Wisconsin and California. We get a lot of cheddar barrels out of Idaho. BUT, if the price of trucking issues we face nationwide are exacerbated by poor back-haul opportunities for trucking companies out of Idaho, it may be reasonable to source that cheddar somewhere else. Say a centralized exchange where the buyer may get a freight allowance on the purchase price if transporting cheese over 300 miles.

Finally, we've seen an interesting pattern this year. When the block market was 20-30 cents above barrels, barrel buyers built up huge inventories. It was an apparent sale on cheese. Over the past several months, they likely whittled down those inventories. Is it possible that they now collectively step back in to get some more barrels bought helping to prop up barrels at a strange time of year? Particularly Absolutely.

While we've got plenty of cheese (over 64 million lbs. of barrel cheese has traded during spot calls so far this year vs. just over 31 million lbs. for 2016), barrel cheese is holding in there now. By the showing of bids on the spot market, there doesn't seem to be any slow-down yet (as of this writing) in demand interest around the mid-\$1.60s. And we expect that can (1) hold on longer than people expect and (2) could make block cheese look too cheap.



Although it would not surprise us to see the Block market try to tighten the historic December spread before Christmas, the general concern for a cheese price decline rolling into 2018 is palpable. Normally things quiet down this time of year, but from our vantage point it looks more like the risk now is a late-year surge in cheese market volatility, which may span well into 2018.



**University of Idaho**  
College of Agricultural and Life Sciences



## CAFE

*By Michael Parrella, Dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, University of Idaho*

**T**he Idaho Center for Agriculture, Food and the Environment addresses a widely acknowledged change in Idaho: the state's agriculture floats on a white tide of milk. And it's rising.

More than 10 years ago, dairy industry and university leaders began working on forming a major research collaboration to address changes in agriculture created by the growing dairy industry. Since then, Idaho's agriculture and food processing industries grew and became more complex. The plan for the new research center broadened as a result.

The research facility and its \$45 million price tag would be the largest investment in an agricultural research facility in decades. Idaho legislators approved an initial \$10 million for the project earlier this year.

CAFE would address the state's changing agricultural balance to animal industries from crops. It would increase production efficiency and address quality needs of a burgeoning food processing industry and tackle environmental concerns.

The 2005 addition of the Nancy M. Cummings Research, Extension and Education Center near Salmon to the U of I-based Idaho Agricultural Experiment Station system addressed beef cattle research. It was created largely through the vision of private benefactors to serve the local community.

CAFE's agenda will be broad, but it will also provide critical capacity to address the largest change in Idaho agriculture, the growth of milk production and all that goes with it.

Dairy's needs are clear. In October 1987, Idaho ranked 14th among the top 21 dairy states with 162,000 cows producing 200 million pounds of milk that month.

In October 2017, Idaho and New York tied for third with 1,239 million pounds of milk. But Idaho's 599,000 cows were pumping beyond their weight, averaging 2,055 pounds of milk compared to New York's 620,000 cows' 1,985-pound monthly average.

Dairy science nearly doubled milk production per cow from 1,234 to 2,055 pounds in the 40-year span. Idaho's

dairy cow herd grew threefold. The combo vaulted Idaho into the No. 3 position nationally.

The dairy industry continues to focus on increasing efficiency, both fiscal and production. U of I researchers study dairy cow nutrition and fertility to make the most of each cow on the lot.

Agronomists focus on crop production to supply the herds. Hay is among the highest value crops grown in the state.

Corn acreage at times tops potato acreage, another factor reflecting the rise of animal agriculture and its reliance on the popular feed grain.

The dairies supply consumers' growing appetite for milk, cheese, yogurt, lactose, meat, and whey products. CAFE's research agenda includes boosting Idaho's rural communities, enhancing the sustainability of Idaho

agriculture, and inspiring food innovation, quality, and safety.

On the community front, CAFE researchers from many disciplines would work together to improve the future of rural communities and growing Hispanic populations. The work would include improving the quality and sustainability of air, land, and water resources.

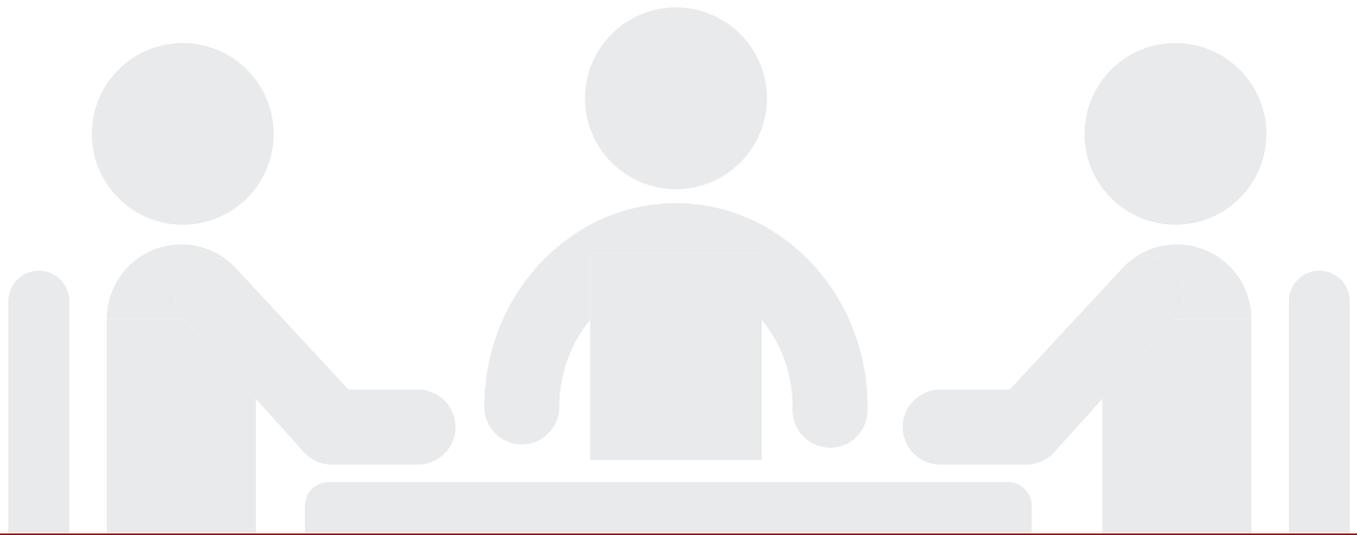
For environmental sustainability, CAFE researchers would study irrigation efficiency and

nutrient management. They would seek ways to convert waste into value-added products and protect soil and water quality.

CAFE research would grow Idaho's food processing industry and trim its environmental impact. The goal: expand Idaho's economy, food production and markets, and give consumers healthy, affordable foods.

**"The dairies supply consumers' growing appetite for milk, cheese, yogurt, lactose, meat, and whey products."**





# IDA DISTRICT MEETINGS 2018

Come learn more about two of IDA's major initiatives.



Idaho's Dairy Worker Training  
& Safety Program Update

*Ryan DeWit*



Phosphorus Indexing: Everything You  
Need to Know About Upcoming Changes

*April Leytem, PhD*  
*Dave Bjorneberg, PhD*  
*Stephanie Kulesza, PhD*  
*Megan Satterwhite, MS*

## AGENDA

1. IDA Legislative & Milk Markets Update  
*Rick Naerebout*
2. Dairy West Promotion Update  
*Cindy Miller*
3. Idaho's Dairy Worker Training & Safety Program Update  
*Ryan DeWit*
4. Phosphorus Indexing: Everything You Need to Know About Upcoming Changes  
*April Leytem, PhD*  
*Dave Bjorneberg, PhD*  
*Stephanie Kulesza, PhD*  
*Megan Satterwhite, MS*

## MEETING LOCATIONS & DATES

### **Magic Valley**

January 9th, 2018  
Fine Arts Auditorium  
(Elevation 486)  
195 River Vista Place  
Twin Falls, ID 83301  
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

### **Treasure Valley**

January 10th, 2018  
Hampton Inn and Suites  
(Idaho Center)  
5750 E Franklin Road  
Nampa, ID 83687  
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

### **Preston**

February 21st, 2018  
Robinson Building  
186 West 2nd North  
Preston, ID 83263  
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

### **Idaho Falls**

February 22nd, 2018  
Hilton Garden Inn Idaho Falls  
700 Lindsay Boulevard  
Idaho Falls, ID 83402  
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.



**RICE  
DAIRY**



## PLANNING THE BUDGET FOR NEXT YEAR

By Cody Koster, Vault Technologies

It's almost that time of year again: year-end reviews and budget-to-actuals are being gone over to see how the business did. Also, with the New Year right around the corner, projected financials are being analyzed to get a better idea of the upcoming year's break-even point. This can be a stressful time for any dairy operation, but especially so with the low milk prices we have all seen this year.

Budgeting is crucially important to the business planning process. This gives owners the ability to forecast whether the business will be in the black or red at the end of each year and every month in between. When you own a dairy operation, one can budget all day, every day. You usually know what your input costs are going to be well before that quarter of the year arrives. But the dairy industry differs from other businesses out there in that because we don't know what we will be paid for our product until we get the milk check halfway through the following month. It's that uncertainty that can get you caught in a bad spot and under your break-even number.

A big part of understanding your break-even point is knowing what your basis is. Not every dairy in America can still say "my break-even is Class III plus." A necessary step is realizing what is taken out of your milk check that you can't control. Many of us have separate spreadsheets for different quarters or even different years. Often, people go to accountants, hand over their books, and let the professionals take over. However, dairy farmers are

beginning to use technology to help take the uncertainty out of their basis risk as much as possible, while also keeping an accurate and up to date bottom line.

Programs like Vault Technologies make the budgeting and forecasting process a little less stressful. Vault takes all of those spreadsheets and puts them into one easy to use space. There are places to house different categories such as feed expenses, non-milk revenue, and even non-feed expenses that will help calculate your profit and loss. The Vault milk check reconciliation page calculates your basis by using a full year's worth of actual milk checks. The Vault projected price takes into account your delivery location and the utilizations by class on a 3-year average and then compares that to the actual milk check numbers. Vault can then give you an average basis on a 12, 24, and 36 month rolling average. The more milk checks you can reconcile, the more your basis number can be honed in and pinpointed.

Being connected in real-time to the futures market at the CME is a significant help when it comes to figuring out your break-even point for the coming year. It's a big piece of the projection puzzle. Getting forward pricing information is crucial to helping set your budgetary goals.

They say "knowledge is power." It's great to see the dairy community is starting to realize that power is finally at their fingertips.



## PHOSPHORUS INDEXING: A DIRECTOR'S PERSPECTIVE

*By Willie Bokma, IDA Director*

**T**oday in late December as I sit looking out my office window and see snowflakes fall, it's hard to think about the upcoming crop year. Yeah, the salesmen have come by and I have made some seed decisions, but the ground is frozen!

Right now, soil health is the furthest thing from my mind, but it has become a buzzword. However, I am excited about the upcoming potential to use phosphorus indexing on our fields to allow us to use the best nutrient guidelines that are available to us. Many other states use phosphorus indexing instead of just a P threshold for their nutrient management plan standards.

The idea of phosphorus indexing is that we can use the different characteristics within each field to determine the amount of phosphorus to apply. Fields are like children - they are all different! Measurements such as the slope of the field as well as if the field is bordering a ditch or canal or the distance to a waterway, are used to determine a score. This score is a risk rating for the field, estimating the risk of phosphorus loss, and is used to determine how much phosphorus can be applied to that field. Also, different soil types as well as soil PH change P availability. Many things we do that make common sense as well as save soil, nutrients,

or water, are called Best Management Practices or BMPs. If the field has sediment retention ponds and/or filter strips on field ends, using things like PAM (polyacrylamide) as an irrigation practice on gravity watered fields can affect the P-Index score. Other cropping practices such as using cover crops, minimal till, or no till can also affect your score. These different field management practice measurements and scores can help us utilize phosphorus much better than the straight P threshold will do.

Some fields in our state are higher than the 40 ppm threshold that our current NMP standard allows to put phosphorus on. If these fields are in your nutrient management plan and have an increasing phosphorus level, you would not be allowed to add any dairy byproduct (manure) to them. IDA is working with our legislators and regulators to hopefully change the way we manage phosphorus. Dr. Stephanie Kulesza and Megan Satterwhite have been hired as well to help us manage our nutrients better as a state association to avoid missteps that dairymen in other states have experienced. The state is placing more scrutiny on the way we manage our byproducts. This means more inspections and potential violations.



We dairymen, the NMP writers, and ISDA are concerned that fields close to dairies will possibly run out of the ability to apply any nutrients. This will increase our costs in the transportation of our byproducts to available fields. If a dairy is concerned about the cost of writing a new nutrient management plan that incorporates P-Indexing, he should carefully consider the extra costs of exporting manure to fields farther away. Using the P-Index may allow him to continue to apply manure to those fields closest to the dairy if the risk of P loss to the environment is minimal. I know that I am constantly looking for ways to save a little money. Transportation costs for any inputs need to be looked at. All of the custom farmers I work with are always happy to add a couple cents to their per-mile fees on any work done. Wear and tear on manure trucks can be an ongoing source of frustration. Currently, we have two which can be two too many if they're broke down, but normally they're okay!

I farm about 1,000 irrigated acres. Usually, 500 acres are in corn and the other 500 are alfalfa. Most dairies in our area do similarly, applying byproduct during the corn years and mining it out during the alfalfa years. Some of my fields have a lot of slope and lie close to

the irrigation canal. We manage these carefully. Of course, the fields lying closest to the dairy seem to have higher levels of phosphorus, and the field farthest away which were purchased more recently have lower levels of phosphorus. It's funny how that is! As phosphorus is one of the more expensive fertilizers farmers can buy, any tools that we can use to help us manage this nutrient are worth looking at.

On a different note, one of the most worthwhile farming considerations I have run across recently was the advice that Dr. Stephanie Kulesza gave me on waiting to soil sample after the corn was 6 inches tall. What she said made sense. The soil warmth activates the available nutrients and most soil samples don't show the true availability if they are taken when the soil is cold. I barely use any nitrogen now on my fields, which has saved me considerable amounts of money. It's funny that my agronomist/fieldman who sells chemical fertilizer never told me this! IDA is constantly trying to look for ways to help us in our plight.

Kind regards and a blessed New Year,

Willie Bokma



195 River Vista Place  
Suite #308  
Twin Falls, Idaho 83301

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

**January 9th, 2018** District Meetings - Magic Valley

**January 10th, 2018** District Meetings - Treasure Valley

**February 21st, 2018** District Meetings - Preston

**February 22nd, 2018** District Meetings - Idaho Falls

## **UDI BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Pete Wiersma** - President, IDA; Co-Chair, UDI

**Arie Roeloffs** - Vice President, IDA

**Don Heida** - Secretary/Treasurer, IDA

**Rick Naerebout** - CEO, IDA

**Mike Siergersma** - Chairman, IDPC; Co-Chair, UDI

**Brian Esplin** - Vice Chairman, IDPC

**Karianne Fallow** - CEO, IDPC/DW

John Brubaker, Bernie Teunissen, Ted Vander Schaaf, Kim Wolfley,  
Chris Stevenson, Dave Veenhouwer, John W. Wright, Dan Gilbert,  
Willie Bokma, Tony DeWit, Kom Korn, Allan Swainston, Tom Dorsey