

**Oconto County UW-Extension
Abby Huibregtse, Agriculture Agent
Eastern District Resource Management Grant Final Report**

I was able to put the District Resource Management dollars to use to cover some costs of this successful program for clientele in my county. The success story has the details.

Dairy Producers Learn about Hoof Care in Oconto County

Situation: Lameness can be an issue on any farm, regardless of size or facilities. Dairy herds around the world average 25 percent lameness rates. The cost of treating lameness and the losses associated with it are significant. In 2006 Cornell University estimated that lameness cost a dairy farm \$404 per case. A needs assessment conducted by Oconto County UW-Extension Agriculture Agent Abby Huibregtse asked farmers to rank their areas of interest or concern. Hoof health led the way as the number one concern with local dairy farmers.

Response: Many dairy farmers utilize trained hoof trimmers to treat lame cows. However, often times other factors on the farm could be changed to have an impact. Farmers can also do some preventative and minor hoof care on their own if properly educated. To help local producers become more knowledgeable and confident in hoof care, Huibregtse decided to coordinate a local hoof health meeting. She invited Karl Burgi, a hoof trimmer and hoof care instructor, to present to the group. In order to provide this high quality event at a low cost to attendees, Huibregtse secured some funding through an Eastern District Resource Management grant to cover part of the speaker costs and travel. A local company also partnered with UW-Extension to provide more financial support for the meeting.

Results: The workshop was held in November of 2008. The meeting was split into two sessions. The morning presentation focused on hoof anatomy, causes of lameness, and lameness prevention. The afternoon session focused on selecting a quality hoof trimmer and maximizing maintenance hoof trims. A total of 49 local dairy producers and employees were present. A few farms from neighboring counties sent employees to attend as well. Farms represented ranged in size from under 50 cows to more than 1,000. Participants were very attentive and asked many questions of the speaker. Huibregtse heard many positive comments after the meeting in discussions with farmers.

Evidence: To assess the effectiveness of this meeting, a survey was distributed post-workshop. Responses were received by twenty-seven participants, including sixteen farm owners, nine employees, and two agribusiness professionals. Twenty-five of the respondents said that they would be able to use this information on their farm or job. Responses indicated an overall increase in knowledge gained on a five-point scale, and results showed that knowledge increased by 1.72 points in understanding hooves and 1.2 points in implementing a successful hoof health program. Overall comments on the evaluations showed interest in more information on this topic, and as a result Huibregtse plans to do more hoof care programming in the future.