

# PENNSYLVANIA

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# DAIRY ADVISORY TEAMS

The Pennsylvania State University ▪ College of Agricultural Sciences ▪ Spring 2001 ▪ Volume 1 / 4

## OUR FEATURED TEAM: MILBRO HOLSTEINS, BOSWELL, PA

“Communication is our primary goal. We strive for unity in our operation, keeping everyone informed and working together.” The Miller’s not only have better communication with their employees, but also with their consultants. They have adopted several ideas suggested by their team members including spending more time in the planning process. By putting pencil to paper, the Miller’s have written standard operating procedures for the milking parlor, a protocol for reproduction, and nutrient management plans. When goals are achieved, the Miller’s celebrate by having ice cream parties or dinner at a restaurant. The Miller’s have some advice for producers who are considering a team.



The Miller Family: Front row (left to right): Mark, Martha, Nicholas, and Jill Miller. Back row: Jarrett Kyger, Julie, Kirsten, and Ben Miller.

“Choose a skilled coordinator, one that you can work with. Be open to the ideas and of your team members and implement the changes. Be patient with your team. Sometimes you don’t see results immediately. Most importantly, keep the tone of your meetings positive. Look at the weaknesses and challenges as well as the strengths and accomplishments at all team meetings.”

The team members that meet on a monthly basis are: Mark, Martha, and Ben Miller, Enos Tice (Team Coordinator, Milkin’ Menus), Bob Brown (retired PSU Extension Agent), Mike Carr (Somerset Trust), Larry Ogline (Ogline & Black), Bob Taylor (Dairy Detail Management), and Dr. Steve Triol (Animal Medical Center of Somerset).

## **TIES THAT BIND– VIRTUAL TEAMS**

Do teams need to be together in order to work together? Consider this: Warren Larsen, CEO of the New Zealand Dairy Board, created virtual, multicultural teams at the center of his new organizational structure. The result: This small co-op of farmers recently sold \$40 million worth of mozzarella to the world's largest pizza chain, Pizza Hut.

Examples of virtual or distributed teams exist in many different areas of the corporate world, but what about small or mid-sized agricultural businesses. Can virtual teams work with the businesses that you work with?

**ABSOLUTELY!**

The lost opportunity of not having someone at the meeting can be gained back by having people “virtually” be part of the meeting and of the team. Team members may be on a speaker phone, sending email, or participating via the Internet or videoconference connections. The downside to being virtually there, is feeling isolated and not feeling like a team. Here are three ideas for helping virtual teams succeed:

1. Take a picture of the whole team together (or piece a composite of everyone) and give everyone a copy. This helps with the “mental image” of the team.
2. Acknowledge who is missing in the room or from the team at the beginning of each meeting.
3. Develop “News Flashes”, short bits of information that can be sent via email or left on an answering machine in 30 seconds. For example, milk production reached the 90 pound mark today or all the haylage is in the bunker or the price of company X stock went to ...

The ties that bind virtual teams together are the same as those that bind teams who meet in the same room at the same time—sharing of a common purpose and commitment to each other!

# Announcing...

## Skills for Successful Teams

OCTOBER 9, 2001 @ THE LANCASTER HOST OR

OCTOBER 10, 2001 @ THE CARLISLE CLARION



Are you involved in agriculture in Pennsylvania? Do you like teamwork? Would you like to improve your team skills? Plan now to attend one day of hands-on, interactive workshops designed to enhance your skills in forming, leading and working with teams. Attendance is limited to 50 participants per site by invitation. Registration fee is \$95.

### Workshop Topics:

- ◆ **Interpersonal Skills/Listening Skills**  
*Harry Carey, Jr. - PSU Extension Information*
- ◆ **Goal Setting**  
*John Park - PSU Management Development*
- ◆ **Coaching Skills**  
*Jenny Boyd - Monsanto Dairy Business*
- ◆ **Conflict Resolution**  
*Jim Henion - Genex / CRI, Inc.*
- ◆ **Facilitation**  
*Ed Noe - Pharmacia U.S. Animal Health*

**For more information, or to request an invitation contact:**

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## Quotable Quotes:

**I continue to think that how much a farmer gets out of the team depends on how much they want to get out of the team."**

-Enos Tice, M.S., P.A.S.

**"Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work."**

-Thomas Alva Edison

**"Lost time is never found again."**

-Benjamin Franklin

**"Try not to become a man of success, but rather try to become a man of value."**

-Albert Einstein

**"You cannot escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today."**

-Abraham Lincoln

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