

HOLLY SPRINGS

TOUR SPOTLIGHTS BEEF AND DAIRY RESEARCH

The opportunity to get a firsthand look at research and learn about new production and management strategies brought about 50 producers to the Sept. 18 North Mississippi Beef and Dairy Field Day at the North Mississippi Branch Experiment Station near Holly Springs.

During the morning program, MSU College of Veterinary Medicine professor Wayne Groce updated the group on herd health and biosecurity issues. He discussed how recent disease outbreaks in livestock overseas have been handled and the implications for biosecurity in the U.S.

Baleage management and economics were the topics of a presentation by Mike McCormick, resident coordinator of the LSU AgCenter's Southeast Research Station in Franklinton, La.

Baleage, he said, is silage usually made in large round bales and stored in airtight stretch wrap. Its advantages over hay include production of higher quality forage with less equipment and reduced field and storage losses.

The morning program also included presentations on integrated resource management by Mississippi State's IRM coordinator Webb Flowers and management techniques for improving reproductive efficiency by Tim Dickerson, an MSU graduate student in animal physiology.

During the afternoon tour of the station, the producers received an update from area extension livestock agent Mike Howell on management strategies used in the 40-head commercial beef cow/calf prototype herd.

MAFES scientists Angelica Chapa and Terry Smith discussed and demonstrated the tunnel ventilation system being studied at the station's dairy barn. They are using fans to pull air across dampened cooling cells to lower temperatures inside the barn during hot weather.

The system keeps the barn an average of about 9 degrees Fahrenheit cooler than the outside temperature, Smith said. They have noted benefits to the 20 dairy cows

housed in the barn, including reduced respiration rates and increased feed consumption. Air quality and other aspects of the study are continuing.

The final stop on the tour was a 6-acre pasture that has been in continuous production of Marshall ryegrass since 1949 without any seed being added. Marshall ryegrass, assistant superintendent Donald Pogue explained, was developed at the station from a common annual ryegrass that originated in Oregon. It was released as the Marshall variety by MAFES in 1980.



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