

US Dairy Industry To Work With Energy Research Lab On Best Sustainability Practices For Dairy Farms

Rosemont, IL—Representatives of the US dairy industry this week announced an agreement to work with a national energy research laboratory to advance the science and best management practices of renewable energy, environmental stewardship and life cycle analysis of dairy systems and processes.

The Innovation Center for US Dairy, the Dairy Research Institute, and Idaho's Center for Advanced Energy Studies (CAES) are working to develop a national research program focused on enhancing the economic viability of dairy farms and rural communities.

CAES is a national research partnership representing the US Department of Energy, Idaho National Laboratory and the state of Idaho through its research universities. As part of the research program, CAES and the Innovation Center will bring together the science-based information and funding needed to accelerate the development and commercialization of innovative technologies for the dairy industry.

The agreement outlines the following key partnership objectives:

- Collect baseline data on nutrient and manure management practices to assist in the identification of best practices for dairy farms.

- Identify opportunities for dairy farms of all sizes to increase renewable energy production through anaerobic digesters, gasification and composting.

- Research best management practices for farm-based renewable energy production on small, medium and large farms.

- Analyze the US utility grid infrastructure, electric rates and renewable energy incentives applicable to dairy farm operations.

- Identify opportunities to increase funding of national research on sustainable dairy practices, manure management, substrates, renewable energy technologies and smart grid applications.

- Facilitate technology-based economic development.

"Making the most efficient use of natural resources, such as energy, water and waste byproducts, not only contributes to profitability, it also lessens environmental impact," commented Mike Roth, an Idaho dairy farmer, president of the Idaho Dairyman's Association and board member of the Dairy Research Institute.

"Through this industrywide effort, CAES will serve as a model for other US Department of Energy labs in the advancement of sustainability research and transfer of technology to the broader industry," said Dr. Harold Blackman, director of the Center for Advanced Energy Studies. ■