



6.29.12

Farm Energy Efficiency Awareness

Dairy producers looking to squeeze cash from every corner of their budgets may want to examine their energy use. With dairy input costs climbing, the light fixtures, fans and motors running throughout the day in a dairy operation may seem insignificant, but they can waste substantial energy and contribute to higher-than-necessary utility bills.

The Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy®, supported by U.S. dairy producers and managed by Dairy Management Inc., has been working with USDA's Natural Resources and Conservation Services (NRCS), EnSave, Inc. and others across the dairy value chain to grow awareness for farm energy efficiency. (The Innovation Center is a forum for the dairy industry to work together pre-competitively to address barriers and opportunities to foster innovation and increase sales.)

"We are working to grow awareness about farm energy efficiency and point them toward resources," said Allen Dusault, director of Farm Smart and Farm Energy Efficiency at the Innovation Center. "The [SaveEnergy Web Resource](#) and a toll free number (800-732-1399) provide information about farm energy efficiency, energy audit samples, real dairy operation case studies, and tools that help producers estimate possible energy savings. "

The [SaveEnergy](#) site also features a "Finder" tool or interactive map that connects producers to financial assistance that may be available nationally and regionally for energy audits and equipment updates.

"In this tough economic climate where every dollar counts, we simply want producers to know what is available," Dusault said. "If and when the time is right, an energy audit may be something to consider as another tool in their toolbox of cost-cutting measures," adding that there is often funding to help.

Saving energy in dairy facilities can translate to cost savings and improved profitability for dairy operations. An average farm energy audit can help producers identify excess energy consumption, allowing them to reduce energy use from 10 to 35 percent depending on the operation.

A thorough energy audit or Agricultural Energy Management Plan examines current energy use on the dairy by conducting an inventory of the major activities. It also separates utility bills to identify where and how energy is used by specific equipment and processes, and creates recommended options for improved efficiencies and reduced utility costs. Recommendations for energy saving upgrades are provided to producers based on the inventory of systems and equipment in relation to operational function.

Find out more!

Dairy producers, who are interested, can learn more:

- A hotline at 800-732-1399: Producers can call anytime to talk about farm energy efficiency, the audit process or get advice on local resources.
- The **SaveEnergy Web Resource** energy reduction beginning with a survey to identify dairy operations that can benefit the most from an energy audit. The site also includes case studies, sample audits, success stories, and decision support tools.

Click [here](#) for online version.