

Dr. Leland Allenstein Dairy Teaching Herd



New Location for the Herd

The Allenstein dairy teaching herd's current home at Charmany Instructional Facility on Mineral Point Road in Madison is being hemmed in by construction. As new commercial buildings continue to sprout in the area, the school is making plans to move the herd to a more rural location near Lake Kegonsa, not far from Stoughton, Wis.

Our hope is to have the herd fully endowed by the time we make the move. With a \$1 million endowment, the herd will be funded in perpetuity, guaranteeing that future generations of veterinarians will continue to have the opportunity to experience first-hand what it's like to work up-close and personal with a dairy herd.

We're more than half way to our \$1 million goal. If you'd like to help us endow the herd, please contact Kristi Thorson at 608/265-9692 for giving options.

What's new with the herd?

Production Excellence

The herd's milk production and milk quality statistics as reported by the Dairy Herd Improvement Association (DHIA) have been excellent.

According to USDA statistics, the herd is in the top quarter nationally for milk production. And it ranks in the top 10 percent for milk quality.

Dr. Harry Momont, the school's chief of large animal services, notes that this is all the more impressive because so much of the work is being done by students.

"This shows how seriously they take it," he says. "They really buy into cow health. Maintaining this level of quality takes a great deal of effort."

Terry Howard, an emeritus professor of dairy science in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences who helped establish the teaching herd, notes that this is even more of an accomplishment

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Students Share Reasons for Working with Herd

It's all about the students. And according to their feedback, the Allenstein dairy teaching herd is accomplishing its mission. Experience with a real, live milking dairy herd provides access to knowledge that is hard to attain otherwise.

I wanted to get more comfortable being around and working with large animals, and also learn more about basic herd health and management. I think working with the teaching herd has been really helpful in this respect. I feel much more comfortable and confident around these animals than I did before.

Meaghan Broman, 2nd year veterinary medical student had some farm experience, but never worked with cattle before

I decided to work with the herd to get more experience with cattle and also to have a chance to interact with actual animals during a few years in vet school where the actual animal interaction was pretty limited. I became much more competent at giving injections, restraining cows, and knowing what abnormal physical exam parameters might indicate.

Megan Murphy O'Connell, 3rd year veterinary medical student worked with horses previously, but not with cattle

I did not know anything about dairy cattle before working with the herd. Since I am not from a farm background but want to pursue a career in production medicine, it is important to understand not only the animal care but also the monetary value in the industry. The herd has offered explanations as to how farmers make their decisions.

Elsa Karen Ludwig, third year undergraduate student accepted to veterinary medical school in the fall

Everything I know about cows comes from the herd... and I am seriously so grateful that I have this experience.

Caroline Lodge, undergraduate student never been around large animals, wanted experience to evaluate a future career in veterinary medicine

What's New with the Herd, continued from page 1

since the herd is not fed a total mixed ration, but instead is fed components of the ration (silage, hay, and grain) at 12 different feedings daily.

In order to keep quality at such high levels, it is clear that the herd's managers are doing a great job of training and monitoring student milkers.

Kudos!

- Seven out of 9 herd workers who applied to veterinary medical school were accepted.
- Katrina is the herd's first cow to make 40,000 lbs. of milk in a year or less. She is closing in on 250,000 lbs. of milk produced in her lifetime.

Learning Opportunities

Students continue to have positive learning experiences with the teaching herd. The biggest benefit is that a real live milking herd exposes students to all aspects of herd management and production.

Sexed Semen

Recently, the school began using sexed semen for breeding its heifers (maiden cows that have not been bred previously). The goal is to produce more female calves, or heifers.

"Most dystocias or difficult births occur at a cow's first calving," notes Dr. Harry Momont, the school's reproductive specialist. "Heifer calves are smaller, so we're hoping for easier deliveries."

Keeping the cows healthy is the overarching goal. But calving provides an excellent hands-on demonstration for students working with the herd.

"The Allenstein Teaching Herd gives students an opportunity to have a hands-on experience with the



A student worker cleans up after feeding. The Allenstein dairy teaching herd does not receive a total mixed ration. Instead, they receive various dietary components—including silage, hay and grain—at 12 different feedings daily.

reproductive management of a dairy herd," Dr. Momont says. "This is better than just talking about it."

Without the teaching herd, this option wouldn't be available to him.

Embryo Transfers

The school is now doing embryo transfers in the herd so that good cows can remain with the herd even if they are not able to get pregnant.

Dr. Momont points out that this affords another excellent teaching opportunity. Not only do students see how embryo transfers are done in the real world, they also are exposed to a regional veterinarian who specializes in this procedure. Thus they experience options they will have when they enter practice after graduation.

To make a donation:

Checks toward the herd's endowment can be made payable to the UW Foundation, with "Alenstein Teaching Herd" written on the memo line. Mail your donation to: Dr. Leland Alenstein Dairy Teaching Herd, UW School of Veterinary Medicine, 2015 Linden Drive—Rm 2170, Madison, WI 53706

Or, visit www.vetmed.wisc.edu/giving

Donors at the \$1,000 level and above will be listed on a recognition plaque. Questions? Please contact our Office for Advancement at 608/265-9692.

The Dr. Leland Alenstein Dairy Teaching Herd

The Wisconsin School of Veterinary Medicine's dairy teaching herd continues to provide dairy experience to veterinary medical students in an increasingly urbanized world where fewer incoming students have a background in food animal agriculture. The 50-cow herd, purchased in 2000, is one of only four working, functional dairy teaching herds among the nation's 28 veterinary medical schools.

Named in honor of Dr. Leland Alenstein, a prominent dairy practitioner from Whitewater, Wisconsin, who taught at the School of Veterinary Medicine from 1987 to 1994, the herd carries on this kind-hearted man's legendary teaching skills. Like Dr. Alenstein, the dairy teaching herd is an advocate for the dairy industry.

With a \$1 million endowment, the herd will be funded in perpetuity, guaranteeing that future generations of veterinarians will continue to have the opportunity to experience first-hand what it's like to work up-close and personal with a dairy herd.