



Southern Great Plains Dairy Consortium

BACKGROUND:

- Currently Texas ranks eighth, New Mexico ranks ninth and Arizona ranks 13th in total milk production.
- The four-state region of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and Oklahoma had combined sales in 2007 of \$3.6 billion, generating an economic impact of around \$10 billion.
- The tremendous growth of milk production in the area has promoted the development of a first class dairy infrastructure, as evidenced by the opening of Southwest Cheese in Clovis, NM in 2005, the Hilmar Cheese plant opened in Dalhart, TX in 2007 and the building of Pacific Cheese Co. plant in Amarillo, TX in 2008.
- The academic infrastructure to support this industry, however, has not kept pace. Local universities and land grant institutions are challenged to provide timely and adequate information through research and extension programs, and to develop comprehensive teaching or training program for both HR development and students wanting to pursue an academic degree in dairy science.

ACTION:

- A multi-university, interagency Consortium has been established to meet the needs of the rapidly expanding dairy industry in the Southern Great Plains. The Consortium provides a framework for coordinating research, education, extension and diagnostic service programs.
- Participants are: Texas AgriLife Research, Texas AgriLife Extension Service, Texas Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Lab, USDA-Agricultural Research Service, West Texas A&M University, New Mexico Agricultural Experiment Station; New Mexico Cooperative Extension Service, Texas Tech University, Tarleton State University, Oklahoma State University and University of Arizona. In addition, industry support is being provided from trade organizations such as Dairy Producers of New Mexico, Texas Association of Dairymen, Dairy Max and Southwest Dairy Museum.

OPPORTUNITIES:

- Develop and adopt new and existing technologies and educational programs to enhance the efficiency and quality of milk production while mitigating inherent environmental effects, and the related impacts of the Southern Great Plains dairy industry on the region's economy.
- Enhance the dairy industry's competitiveness as well as its ability to produce a safe, wholesome and competitively priced supply of milk and related products. This will be achieved in an environmentally sound manner through expanded cooperative programs of the various universities, state agencies and federal agencies serving the Southern Great Plains in collaboration with the dairy trade organizations and the industries promotional groups.
- The Consortium will create opportunities for developing federal and state Legislative initiatives that will help establish "centers of excellence" among member institutions.

FOCUS:

The initial focus will be placed on major issues identified in two producer forums:

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| — Environmental Quality | — Dairy Production | — Resources for Industry |
| — Dairy Products/Quality | — Economics/Marketing | — Energy Resources |
| — Human Resource Development | — Water Utilization | |

FUNDING:

Consortium funding will be provided by the respective institutions and agencies, along with education and research grants. Special state or federal legislative initiatives are envisioned together with support from allied industries, the dairy industry and other private sources. Consortium partners have substantial research infrastructure, including experimental farms, scientific and engineering laboratories, and access to commercial dairies for support of research, education, extension and diagnostic service programs. Faculty and staff are being developed as resources become available.

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