

President's Letter
Gary Bonestroo
January, 2007

Greetings to everyone. Hope you and your family had a very merry Christmas and have a happy New Year. Remember the real meaning of Christmas and the greatest gift of all, the baby Jesus and the Salvation that he brought to the world.

It has been a very busy time of year getting ready for Christmas, shopping, Christmas school plays, parties, etc. The year also ended with a lot of meetings concerning dairy issues. I was not able to attend all of them like Sharon had to, but I made it to some. We attended the Dairy Max meeting in Grapevine, TX, at the DFA building with Texas Association of Dairymen (TAD), the dairy producer group from Texas, where Sue Ann Claudon and Jim Hill informed us about dairy promotion from different angles, including economic impact as well as environmental stewardship. Both the promotion groups are working together to get the news out to the public that we are good stewards of the land, water and air. Most of us do not have city water where we live and operate our dairies, and we want and need good quality water for our families and cows. It's amazing that people don't understand that.

On the economic impact side, Robert and Victor did a great job with their study and model. They have accomplished what the Texas guys have been trying to do for a long time with no luck because of the cost, which was from \$20,000 to \$40,000 of the model and data. The TAD guys appeared to be flustered about how fast and cheap Robert and Victor did it. So it shows that we are getting our money's worth out of our extension agents from NMSU. They are doing a lot more to help Sharon help us. All this information will be good for the communities to see and hear. We know that we are good environmental stewards but it is important that the public knows as well.

Joint Stockmen's Convention was also in December, and DPNM had a board meeting at that time. During the Board meeting, we had an opportunity to hear from Penn State on the Dairy Alliance program. This program is an educational/dairy management program Penn State offers for their producers. They will be conducting a joint program for Pennsylvania producers and New Mexico dairy producers in Las Cruces in April of 2007. This was all brought together with help from our NMSU dairy extension office.

Friday morning we had a John's meeting. They are conducting a voluntary testing program for dairy. There is money out there that we need to use. It is imperative that we get involved and be proactive otherwise it could be devastating to our industry. We

care, and we need to show that we care!! Also, the testing program will be confidential, but it will provide us a good management tool.

As usual, we discussed many issues at our Board meeting. It was very long but it was a good meeting. We're lucky to have DPNM watching issues that affect are day-to-day lives.

In the middle of December, the Environmental Credit Corp had two different meetings, one in Roswell and one in Clovis, about their Lagoon Cover Program to catch the methane gas and other emissions to receive carbon credits. They will cover our lagoons for free. Of course, they get 85% of the credits, but they are spending the money on the cover. The only issue is that if you want to use methane gas to run your generator, they want 25% percent of the revenue generated. I believe these things can be worked out.

Rumor has it that the Greater Southwest Agency has worked out most of their issues. I guess they have all gone to co-op counseling. I guess it is working. I know there are different views on what would be better, an agency or not. We have been dairying in New Mexico for 25 years and believe me the agency is one of the best things going for us. It is saving us about 85 cents/cwt, believe it or not. We need to keep working together, not apart. National groups like CWT and local groups like DPNM would all benefit if we had 100% membership in both organizations.

At this time, I want to thank Sharon, Kaye, and Susan at DPNM for the great job they have done for us in 2006, and the big job they have ahead of them in 2007, starting with the eight-week legislative session. If you have a bill that concerns you, call Sharon. She would love to have you come up to Santa Fe to help. The Senators and Representatives like to see the producers. It really makes a difference.

Have a good one.