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## **National DHIA annual meeting features sustainability, data-driven decisions**

Boise, Idaho (March 16, 2009) – With a theme of “Sustainability through data-driven decisions,” National Dairy Herd Information Association (DHIA) held its 44<sup>th</sup> annual meeting March 4-5, in Boise, Idaho. Session topics included milk recording, management and analysis, animal identification systems, genomics, dairy beef quality assurance, worldwide dairy update and new economic realities.

“National DHIA is not talking sustainability; we are continuing on long-standing actions toward sustainability,” stated Jay Mattison, CEO and administrator. “As we move into the coming years, there will be as many challenges for the dairy industry as ever. One constant is the sustainability into the coming years will be driven by data for decision making.”

For five consecutive years, the number of U.S. dairy cows on DHI programs has increased – from 4.071 million cows in 2003 to 4.478 million cows in 2008. National DHIA President Dan Sheldon shared this remarkable news with delegates, managers and guests during the association’s annual meeting. Services and products offered by field service providers, labs and dairy records processing organizations drove this growth.

“With the challenges of our economy, we need to use every tool available to optimize the effectiveness of our management strategies and decisions,” said Sheldon. “This next year will challenge all segments of the dairy industry and is a time when DHI data will again prove their worth. Veterinarians, nutritionists, feed dealers and crop and financial consultants need accurate data to help dairy managers make informed management decisions and measure the outcomes of those decisions.”

In addition, Steven Sievert, DHIA Services technical director, demonstrated some key features of [EarTagCentral.com](http://EarTagCentral.com), a web site that offers a wide variety of animal identification (ID)

ear tags and ID accessories. Open 24/7 and providing more than 7,500 ID products, the site offers visual and electronic animal identification ear tags (in various styles, shapes, sizes and colors), taggers, readers and accessories, mainly for dairy and beef cattle, but also for sheep, goats and swine.

Delegates re-elected Kent Buttars, Rocky Mountain DHIA, Lewiston, Utah; Bob McKaig, Indiana State Dairy Association, Logansport, Ind.; and James Zimmerman, Dairy One Cooperative Inc., Ithaca, N.Y.; to serve as National DHIA board members. Other board members include Dan Sheldon, Dairy One Cooperative Inc., Salem, N.Y.; Lee Maassen, Dairy Lab Services, Maurice, Iowa; Steve Hershey, Lancaster DHIA, Manheim, Pa.; Richard Kimball, Vermont DHIA, Spencer, Mass.; Susan Lee, Idaho DHIA, Twin Falls, Idaho; Bruce Dokkebakken, Minnesota DHIA, Buffalo, Minn.; Jon Tollenaar, San Joaquin DHIA, Elk Grove, Calif.; and Steven Smith, DHI-Provo, Provo, Utah, as the Dairy Records Processing Center ex-officio board member. At the board reorganization meeting, all officers were re-elected: President Dan Sheldon, Vice President Lee Maassen, Secretary Steve Hershey and Treasurer James Zimmerman.

Next year's National DHIA annual meeting is set for March 11-12, in St. Pete Beach, Fla.

National DHIA, a trade association for the dairy records industry, serves the best interests of its members and the dairy industry by maintaining the integrity of dairy records and advancing dairy information systems.

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