



For Immediate Release

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## **National DHIA presents Outstanding Service Award to John Cole**

**FITCHBURG, Wis. (March 12, 2018)** – National Dairy Herd Information Association (DHIA) honored John Cole, acting research leader with the Animal Genomics and Improvement Laboratory (AGIL), Agricultural Research Service (ARS), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Beltsville, Md., with its Outstanding Service Award on March 7, during the association’s annual awards banquet in San Antonio, Texas. Cole started his employment with USDA in 2003 as a research geneticist.

Even though he has worked with DHI data for many years, Cole’s direct relationship of working with the National DHIA board of directors started five years ago. “Over the years, we have discussed new data sources and new opportunities for DHI data,” said Cole. “The goal is to provide information that better meets dairy producers’ needs.”

For example, in 2006, stillbirth information was included in dairy cattle genetic evaluations. “We used indices to help dairy producers deliver more live – and healthier – calves,” said Cole.

In the April 2018 dairy cattle evaluations, six new health traits will be introduced. “This important new product is the result of ARS, Council on Dairy Cattle Breeding and National DHIA working together,” said Cole.

While data can be helpful in making management decisions, dairy producers often find themselves “drowning” in information. “One of our goals is to provide contemporary tools that help dairy producers make selection decisions,” said Cole. These tools, for example, will help dairy producers decide which heifers to raise and which cows to cull.

Cole earned his bachelor’s, master’s and doctorate degrees from Louisiana State University. From 1996-2000, he worked as a graduate assistant in the University of Minnesota animal science department. In addition to his role at AGIL, Cole currently serves as an adjunct professor at North Carolina State University and the University of Florida.

National DHIA selected Cole for the Outstanding Service Award due to his outstanding, unselfish service, leadership and guidance in advancing genetics and management research to benefit dairy herds worldwide. “John cares deeply about providing information to dairy producers that is accurate and helpful in making profitable management decisions,” said Jay Mattison, National DHIA CEO.

National Dairy Herd Information Association, 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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