A Few Suggestions on Conducting the Farm Visit

Develop initial thoughts and a plan on the Farm Visit

Herd Management	Nutrition	Herd Health	Reproduction
Milking System	Forage	Youngstock Care	Labor and Family Management
	Environmental Concerns	Financial Management	Leadership
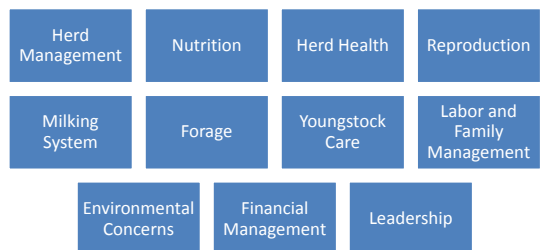
YOUR TEAM'S STYLE

- Develop a strategy up front
  - Approach
  - System
  - Determine each member's strengths
- Do not confine yourself to preconceived ideas
- Each farm is unique and therefore, one size does not fit all

Before you go and after the visit

- Review records that are available
  - Herd size & age pattern changes
  - Milk Production
  - Component shifts
  - Culling pattern
  - Somatic cell count/milk quality
- Review herd health history and trends
- Feed rations, history & forage test results
- Financial/Profitability information

Consult with Advisory Team

- Make sure you talk with key players
  - Owner
  - Veterinarian
  - Feed Representative
  - Banker
  - Others
- What are the perceived opportunities/challenges?

The On-Farm Visit Review

- Cows' environment
- Water supply, quality, and availability
- Rumination times/observations
- Feed bunk management
- Feed quality and form
- Foot and lameness score
- Evaluate manure
- Evaluate body condition/scores

Evaluate the Cows' Environment

- Housing Characteristics
  - Stalls
  - Air
  - Footing
- Cow response to environment
  - Stall usage
  - Walking
  - Cleanliness
- Exercise and cow care
- Cow response to people

Evaluate Feed Bunk Management

- Availability of feed
- Weigh back amounts and appearance
- Feed uniformity
  - Use cottonseed/pellet as marker
- Effective fiber (Penn State box)
- Feeding schedule & frequency
- Feed mixing procedures
  - TMR mixing sequence & time
  - Feed log, load sheet, and receipt

Feed Quality & Form

- Forage tests
  - Testing schedule
  - Results vs. Appearance
- Grain particle size
- Evaluate for mold (visual & odor)
- Evaluate forage particle lenth
- Look for heat damage, fines, & dustiness
- Measure pH of silages