

## Impact of the Tri-State Dairy Nutrition Conference

**Maurice L Eastridge<sup>1</sup>**

*Department of Animal Sciences  
The Ohio State University*

~ CELEBRATING 30 YEARS ~

The Tri-State Dairy Nutrition Conference, Fort Wayne, IN is a yearly conference for feed industry personnel, nutrition consultants, university personnel, veterinarians, and interested dairy producers. The conference began in 1992 as a spin-off from the 1991 Ohio Dairy Nutrition Conference. In September 1991, a meeting to discuss planning a tri-state conference was held with faculty and Extension staff from Purdue, Michigan State, and The Ohio State Universities. The first Conference was held May 20 - 21, 1992 on the Purdue campus in Fort Wayne, IN. A Planning Committee was formed after the 1992 Conference. Due to a continuous expansion of attendance, the conference moved in 1996 from the Purdue campus to the Grand Wayne Convention Center. Because of renovation of the Grand Wayne Center, the Conference was held for one year (2005) at the Allen County War Memorial Coliseum in Ft. Wayne. An abstract about the success of the Conference was presented at ADSA in 1999 (*J. Dairy Sci.* 82 (Suppl. 1):56) and was listed among successful dairy nutrition conferences in the special centennial issue of the *Journal of Dairy Science* published in 2006 (*J. Dairy Sci.* 89:1121-1368). The success of the Tri-State Dairy Nutrition Conference continues to be demonstrated by attendance (Figure 1) and citation or reprinting of proceedings manuscripts in the scientific, international, and popular press literature. The Proceedings are ordered by many people within and outside the U.S., placed on reserve in the USDA National Agricultural Library, and indexed by the Institute for Scientific Information.

Presentations and proceedings papers are oriented to timely, in-depth, and practical dairy nutrition topics to meet on-farm nutritionists' needs and provide the results of recent research findings. A tradeshow and rotating industry-sponsored pre-conference have been a part of the annual Conference for many years. In 2016, a hot topics breakfast was initiated, and a post-conference program was offered in 2016, 2017, and 2018. A workshop program was begun in 2013 on Monday afternoon with the focus the first year on nutrition formulation computer programs and was continued during the following years: 2014 – dairy records management software; 2015 – TMR management software; 2016 – animal monitoring technology; 2017 – feed analysis; 2018 – nutrition formulation software; and 2019 – feed sampling. A conference web page was initially launched in 1997, and a new web site was launched in 2018 (<http://tristatedairy.org>). The attendance by students at the Conference has continued to grow, and we presently provide an undergraduate presentation program and separate MS and PhD research presentation categories. We offer free registration and lodging to all students attending the Conference. In 2017, a specialized undergraduate program was launched for Monday evening and Tuesday morning of the Conference. The Conference has been contributing annually \$1,000 to the North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge because of its value to students and the dairy industry. Continuing education credit is offered to veterinarians and members of the American Registry of Professional Animal Scientists (ARPAS). ARPAS exams also are administered at the Conference. Due to the global pandemic with COVID-19, the Conference was cancelled in 2020, and due to the ongoing pandemic

---

<sup>1</sup>Contact at: 2029 Fyffe Court, 221B Animal Science Building, Columbus, OH 43210-1095, (614) 688-3059, FAX: (614) 292-1515, Email: [eastridge.1@osu.edu](mailto:eastridge.1@osu.edu).

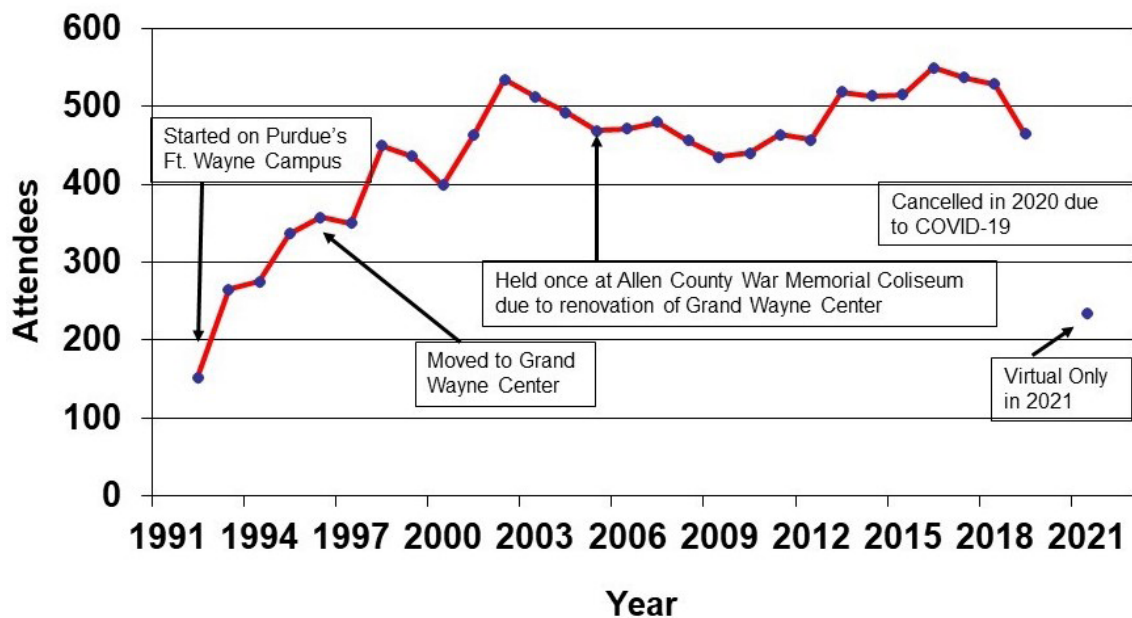


with travel limitations and social distancing requirements, the 2021 Conference was conducted only as a virtual Conference. This virtual Conference was scaled down to include student presentations on Monday afternoon and the Conference with invited speakers held on Tuesday and Wednesday from 9:30 am to 2:00 pm. The 2022 Conference is back in full swing with in-person and virtual offerings.

The Planning Committee consists of five feed industry personnel, one nutrition consultant, one veterinarian, one Extension staff from one of the three host universities, and a faculty member from each of the three universities, with additional ad-hoc faculty members from the three universities to assist in organizing and conducting the Conference. An ad hoc member who represents the company hosting the pre-conference and an OSU conference assistant also meet with the Planning Committee. Faculty members from the three universities provide continuous service on the Committee, but the other eight members serve 3-year staggered terms. The Committee meets twice each year; once in September to plan the next Conference and it meets during the Conference.

Another milestone for the Conference occurred in 2015 when it was removed for accounting purposes from The Ohio State University to a non-profit organization 501 (c) (3) status. The purpose of this was to sustain the future of the Conference through changing staff at universities and policy changes at universities. A constitution and bylaws were developed and an outside firm is providing the accounting services. The Conference now operates with a Board of Directors, with a somewhat similar structure to the Planning Committee.

Multi-state programs similar to the Tri-State Dairy Nutrition Conference can serve a vital role in bringing research and Extension faculty from different universities and allied-industry professionals together to meet the educational needs of a rapidly changing dairy industry. The Conference has resulted in major impacts to the feed industry and dairy producers, and influenced students seeking careers in animal nutrition and the direction of some research programs. Your continued support of this Conference is much appreciated.



**Figure 1.** Attendance at the Tri-State Dairy Nutrition Conference from 1992 through 2021.

