

Division of Marketing  
Agricultural Development and Diversification (ADD) Program

1998 Grant Final Report

Grant Number 13032

**Grant Title** Breed Association Consolidation A Wisconsin Marketing Effort (Phase 1)

**Amount Awarded** \$15,000.00

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### **Project Intent**

The intent of this project was to encourage a majority of the seven registered dairy breed associations to consolidate their offices, functions and staff and to relocate them to the World Dairy Center in Madison, Wisconsin.

### **Project Initiation**

The project was initiated at a time when several of the breed associations were in transition. One of the executive secretaries had resigned, one needed substantial computer updating, and others were struggling financially.

### **Progress Made**

An initial meeting of the breed associations was held at the 1998 World Dairy Expo. A follow up meeting was held in Louisville, Kentucky. This was an excellent opportunity for the association leaders to meet and discuss mutual goals, challenges and opportunities.

Following these meetings, I met with two breed associations to discuss how computer needs could be consolidated. They both agreed that a recommendation should be made to their associations to make this step.

An attorney was hired to prepare an outline as to the procedures and options for consolidating efforts.

### **Progress Stopped**

Because for several of the associations, this was a critical juncture, they needed to consolidate or spend additional funds to bolster their organization.

Consolidation was thwarted for two reasons. The board members of these organizations are sole proprietors of their farming operations. Business consolidation or cooperative efforts are unfamiliar to most of them. It is much easier to approve spending additional reserves than try to determine the form and timeline of consolidation.

Secondly, staff would also be consolidated to reduce expenses. The majority of current staff are not interested in finding new jobs or relocating. Thus, they are not supportive of such a plan.

A new executive secretary was hired, new computer hardware and programs purchased, and all discussions of consolidation stopped.

### **Evaluation**

No one could legitimately say that this project was successful. The window of opportunity was much smaller than expected. Results were virtually none.

Fortunately, only a very small portion of the funds were spent. However, the grant applicant does regret that these funds were tied up and not available to another applicant that may have been more successful.

### **Impact**

While seeds of consolidation may have been planted, they have yet to sprout. It is hoped that these initial efforts may develop into serious discussion. World Dairy Expo plans to continue to push for this action and will assist in anyway possible.