

An update on the Repro Money Program: A farmer directed team-based extension program to improve reproductive performance in Wisconsin dairy herds.

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Repro Money is an extension program offered to Wisconsin dairy farmers who want to improve reproductive performance of their dairy herd. This farmer-directed team-based approach consists of 4 meetings during a 6- to 8-mo period. The goal is to help dairy farmers best utilize their personnel and advisers in a coordinated way to improve reproductive performance and profitability. Data from all farms that enrolled and completed the program (n = 13) between fall 2010 and summer 2012 were included in this analysis. These farms averaged 385 cows (range = 67 to 850) with a rolling herd average of 12,524 kg/cow per year (range = 21,350 to 32,000 kg). Financial and management data were obtained with the aid of a guided situation assessment, action plan, and goal setting tool. Data were analyzed before and after participating in the program to evaluate the program's effect on enhancing reproductive performance and herd profitability. After finishing the program, number of days in milk decreased 6 d (0 to 43), insemination risk increased 3% (53 to 56%), conception risk increased 3% (38 to 41%), and the 21-day pregnancy rate increased 3% (19 to 22%) among these herds. These improvements were estimated to yield an average economic gain of \$55/cow per year with a total economic gain of \$177,185/yr for the participating farms. This amount is expected to increase due to future additional improvements and management changes to be implemented using the program principles because 70% of participating farms decided to continue with regular meetings after finishing the program. All 13 farms that finished the program were highly satisfied with the outcomes with 85% of farms achieving the goals set, which included increasing the 21 d pregnancy rate, increase conception risk, and decreasing days to first AI. The 3 most important management changes that resulted from participating in the Repro Money Program were to perform better recordkeeping, focus on transition cow management, and improve synchronized breeding protocols. Supported by AFRI Competitive Grant no. 2010-85122-20612.

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