



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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INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVE

Poor reproduction in dairy cattle is a multifactorial problem that includes aspects of physiology, genetics, management, health, and nutrition. Thus, improving reproductive performance requires an integrated approach among farm personnel and consultants that deal with reproduction. Our objective is to improve the reproductive efficiency and profitability of the dairy enterprise through implementation of farmer-directed team-based program called Repro Money.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

- ❖ Each farm that enrolls in the Repro Money program agrees to conduct 4 meetings during a 6 to 8 month period.
- ❖ Before the first meeting, the farm owner selects team members and a team leader.
- ❖ At each meeting, farmer and team members go through records to find key indicators of reproductive performance using a data gathering and survey tool to analyze and identify farm-specific critical control points for successful reproductive management (Figures 1 & 2).
- ❖ Based on results from this tool, the team sets goals, develops an action plan and assigns responsibilities for individual team members (Figures 3 & 4).
- ❖ At the fourth meeting, each team verifies improvements and evaluates program impact on reproductive efficiency.

CHARACTERISTICS OF FARMS COMPLETING THE REPRO MONEY PROGRAM

ITEM	OUTCOME, average (range)
Number of farms finishing program (6/13/2013)	13
Rolling Herd Average	27,585 (21,350-32,000)
Economic Gain (\$/cow per year)	55 (0-278)
Herd size average	385 (67-850)
Economic Gain (\$/farm per year)	17,7185 (0 – 40,310)
Goals set that were reached (%)	85
Continue team meetings (%)	70
Number of team members (average)	4 (2-7)
Extension agent as team leader (%)	100

ACTIONS & OUTCOMES OF FARMS COMPLETING THE REPRO MONEY PROGRAM

- ❖ Actions and outcomes of Wisconsin dairy farms (n=13) that completed the Repro Money Program were assessed.
- ❖ Data from DHIA and farm records were collected by team leaders using forms described before.

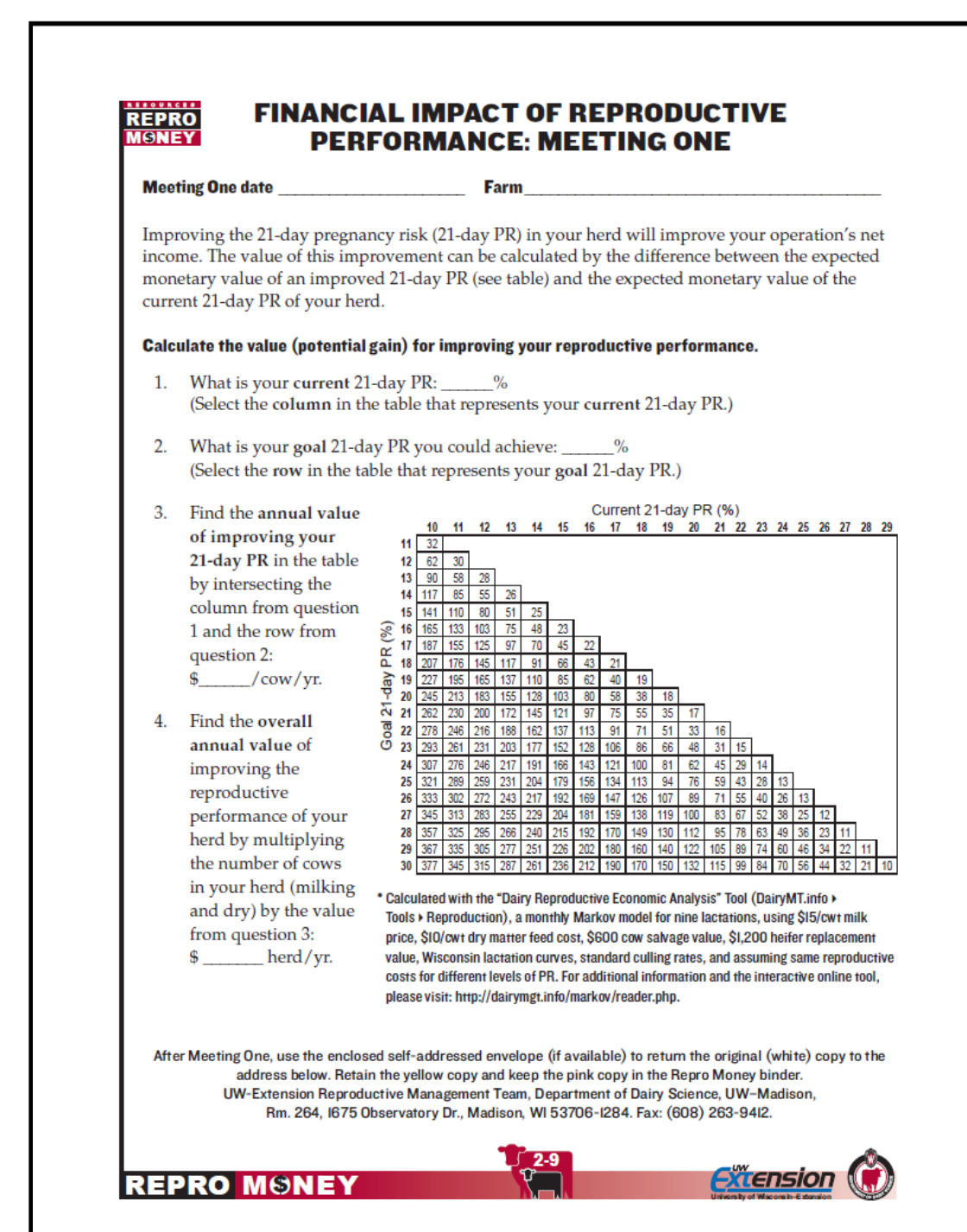


Figure 1. Expected monetary Value of an improved 21-d PR from current to goal

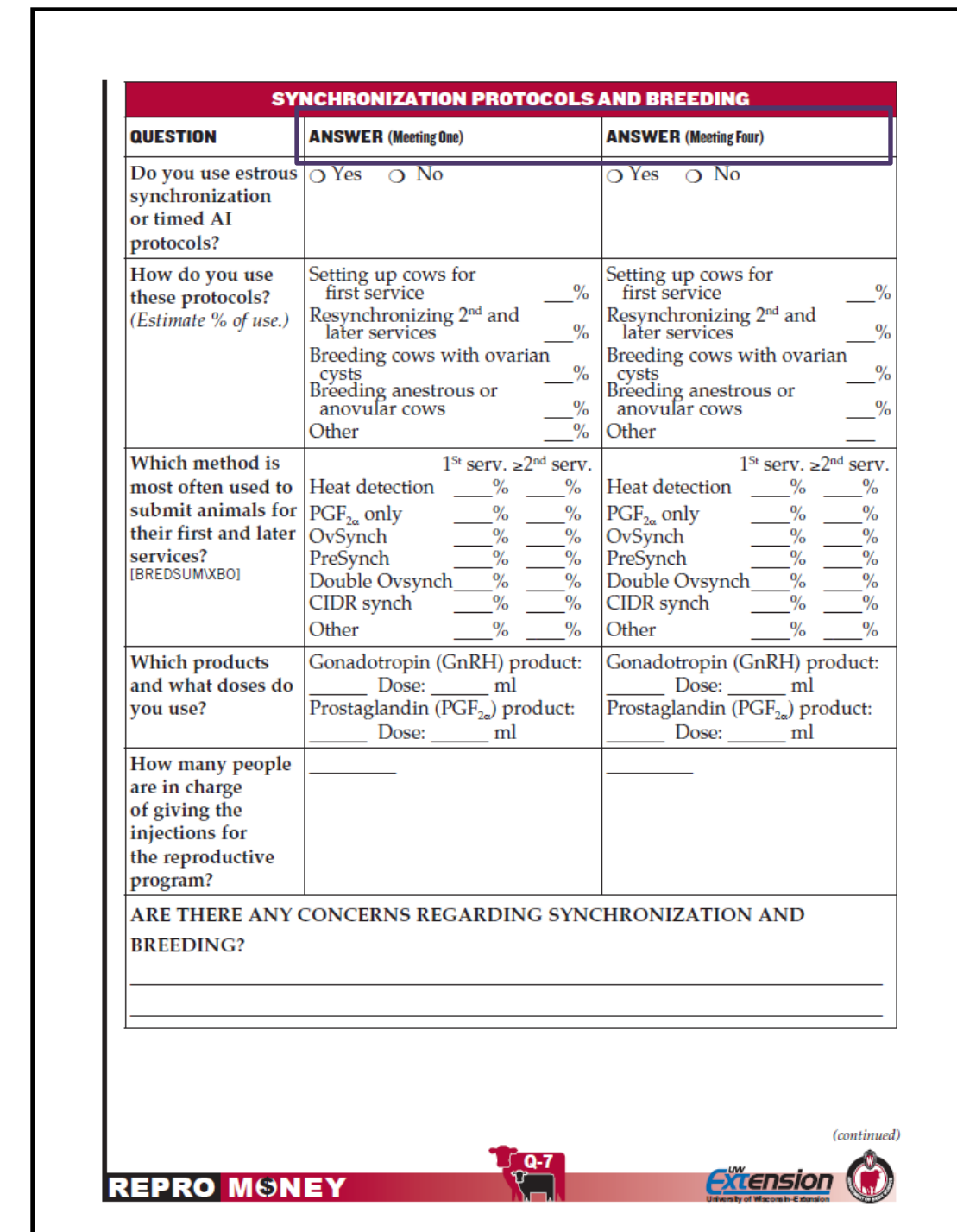


Figure 2. Section of tool on use of synchronization programs in the farm

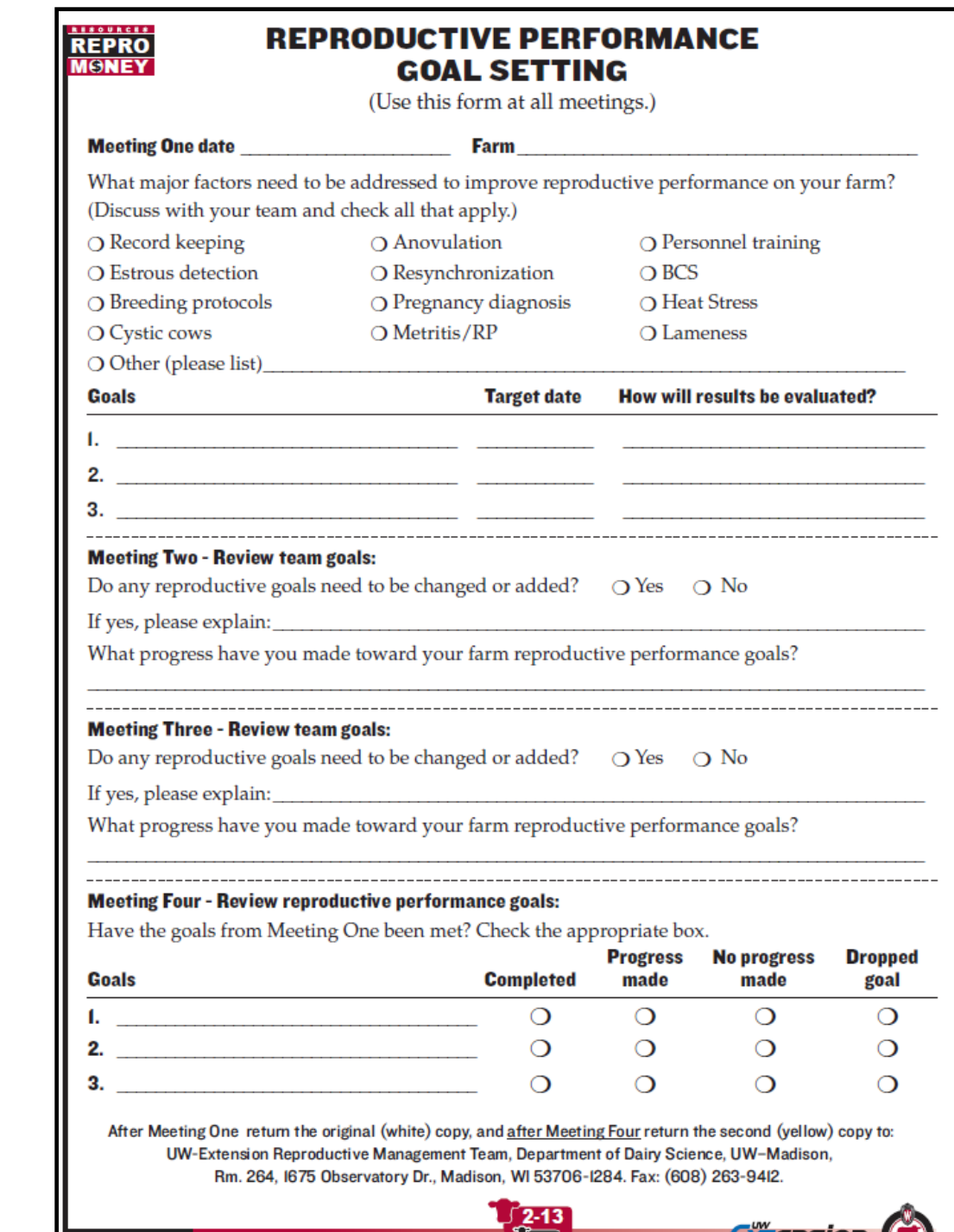
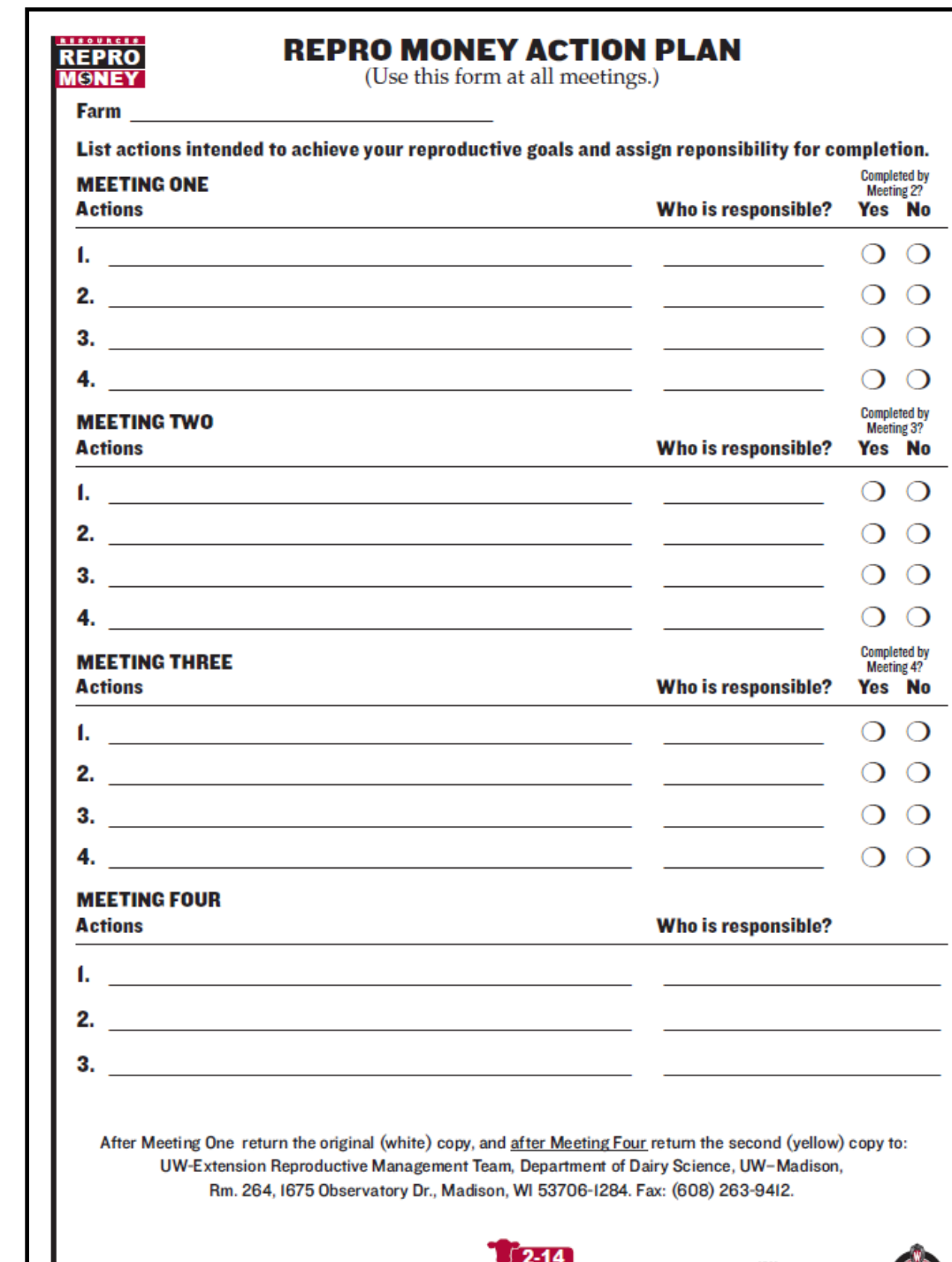


Figure 3 & 4: Goals are set and an action plan is devised after analyzing data and reproductive management plan.



FARM SELECTION CRITERIA AND DATA COLLECTION:

- ❖ All dairy farms in Wisconsin are eligible to participate in the Repro Money program
- ❖ Teams were initiated in response to statewide recruitment efforts by extension professionals, private veterinarians, or through self-referral by the farm.
- ❖ Enrollment is continuous and voluntary. Today we have 24 farms that enrolled and are in various stages of the process.
- ❖ Data from all farms that enrolled and completed the program (n=13) between Fall 2010 and Summer 2012 were included in this analysis. (Figure 5).



Figure 5. Farm locations that finished the program (n=13; red dots) and currently enrolled (n=27; purple dots)

CONCLUSIONS

- ❖ The objective of this program is to generate measurable improvement in the reproductive performance of Wisconsin dairy herds by developing and implementing an integrated team-based extension program. Results from the data collected from participating farms that finished the program demonstrate that the Repro Money Program is having a continuing success rate with substantial positive economic returns to the individual participants and the Wisconsin dairy business community.
- ❖ These economic returns are expected to increase even more due to future additional improvements and management changes to be implemented using the program principles, as 70% of farms decided to continue with regular meetings after formally finishing the program.
- ❖ County Extension agents served as team leaders (100% of all team leaders) providing program coordination, access to resources and technical advice, and actively participating in decision support.
- ❖ All 13 farms that finished the program to date were highly satisfied with the outcomes as 85% of farms achieved the goals set, which included increasing the 21-d pregnancy rate, increase conception risk, and lower days to first artificial insemination.