

NIRS Forage and Feed Testing Consortium

“Dedicated to increasing the accuracy and knowledge of NIRS testing.”

1999 - 2000

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October 20, 1999

TO: NIRS Consortium Membership
FROM: Steve Peterson and Neal Martin
RE: Consortium Activity

A summary of Consortium changes and activities include:

(1) The Consortium's move to Madison.

Neal Martin accepted a position as Director of the U S Dairy Forage Research Center (USDFRC), and the Consortium Board made a subsequent decision to move Consortium operations to Madison. Along with this move comes adjustment of operations handled by the NIRS Consortium Manager located at the University of Minnesota, St. Paul, Minnesota to now be handled by a Business Manager and a NIRS Instrument Specialist. The business manager position has been filled by Patty Laskowski and is located at 8396 Yellowstone Drive, Marshfield, Wisconsin. This location will be the business office of the Consortium. The NIRS Instrument Specialist position has been reclassified and will be reallocated in Madison, Wisconsin. The NIRS Specialist will be officed in the USDFRC, 1925 Linden Drive, Madison, Wisconsin. This location will be the legal and technical location of the Consortium. The NIRS Specialist will use the USDFRC NIRS Systems model 6500 instrument as “The Consortium Master Instrument” and will have access to laboratory support of current or new calibration tests available within USDFRC. USDFRC will initiate new research to increase our understanding of NIRS use in open calibrations as well as new product and new tests with potential for calibration utilization by a National Network of laboratories. A Memorandum of Understanding between USDFRC, the University of Wisconsin, and the NIRS Consortium is under preparation.

The NIRS Consortium offered the NIRS Instrument Specialist position based at USDFRC in Madison to Mark Matteson. Mark turned the position offer down and the position is currently closed as applicants are now being reviewed. The NIRS Project at the University of Minnesota will cover the current salary of the NIRS Consortium Manager, Mark Matteson, through December 1999 and the new NIRS Instrument Specialist salary for at least 30 days after hiring to allow for training.

(2) Projects Underway.

Mark Matteson is currently completing an update of calibrations for NIRS Consortium Alfalfa Breeders and is developing an NIRS instrument monitoring plan for instrument and calibration monitoring within the Consortium.

Neal Martin, Director of USDFRC, expects to develop a standardized *in vivo*, in the animal, program with dairy cattle to provide “A National Standardized” *in vivo* data

set for forage crops. Currently *in vivo* data in the U.S. is not standardized and has been collected from various animal species and from many different locations. A standardized *in vivo* data bank with dairy cattle can eventually be used via NIRS to make *in vivo* predictions. This data set can also be used to validate *in vitro* and *in situ* data in NIRS calibrations.

(3) Future Projects and Activities Planned.

- development of an instrument and calibration monitoring program within the Consortium directed at meeting requirements Foss North America has for calibration marketing packages
- carry out “matching” of Consortium member instruments to the USDFRC 6500 master instrument as part of the monitoring program
- sponsoring of forage testing conference for dairy nutrition specialists perhaps in April of 2000 at USDFRC, Madison utilizing NIRS Consortium lab experiences
- publishing of testing terms definition
- completion of beta test of *in vitro/in situ* test for DM digestion of hay and silage
- investigation of marketing agreement with Foss North America
- expansion of membership

