

**NIRS Forage and Feed Testing Consortium**  
“Dedicated to increasing the accuracy and knowledge of NIRS testing.”

# NIRS Consortium Membership NEWS

November 18, 1999

## September 10, 1999 Board Meeting

The Board of Directors meeting held on September 10, 1999 addressed the following items: (1) Mark Matteson's decline of NIRS Instrument Specialist position housed in Madison. (2) Business Manager position. (3) NIRS Instrument Specialist position. (4) NIRS Consortium budget.

Mark Matteson prepared a letter of regrets, declining an offer from the Consortium to become the NIRS Instrument Specialist housed in Madison, Wisconsin. The Board thanked Mark for all of his efforts to make the Consortium a success. Mark expressed his regrets and thanked the Consortium for the unique opportunities and experiences he has gained.

The Board then discussed the Business Manager position. Dan Undersander described the possibility of cooperating with the UW Soil and Forage Analysis Lab in Marshfield, locating the Consortium business office there. The Board decided to provide 1/3 time support to the UW Soil and Forage Lab for Patty Laskowski, already with a 2/3 time appointment with the lab, to be NIRS Consortium Business Manager.

The position of Instrument Specialist would then be re-opened and posted on the UW Madison employment website.

The Executive Committee had prepared the Annual Consortium Budget for October 1, 1999

through September 30, 2000. Funds were to be made available from the NIRS Consortium Account in the Dept. of Agronomy and Plant Genetics, University of Minnesota, to keep Mark employed at University of Minnesota to complete equation upgrading for the alfalfa breeders and to develop a Consortium instrument and calibration equation monitoring program. The Finance Committee would also make provisions of \$6,000 to \$8,000 for Pat Hoffman to monitor the Consortium RUP calibration. The Finance Committee would develop this final budget. This final budget has since been completed and had been distributed to Members with their packet for request of annual dues.

## October 25, 1999 Board Meeting

The Board of Directors meeting held on October 25, 1999 addressed the following items: (1) Status report of instrument monitoring program. (2) Status of NIRS Instrument Specialist position. (3) Forage Testing Conference Committee report. (4) Draft of Memorandum of Understanding between the U.S. Dairy Forage Research Center, University of Wisconsin Madison, and the Consortium.

Mark Matteson outlined a three-point program of instrument monitoring that would involve: (1) Standardization of instruments. (2) Diagnostics by Members and reporting. (3) Sealed check sample program and reporting.

Before the Monitoring Program can get off the ground, though, an inventory of instruments, equipment, software, and equation

versions that members use is needed so that all members are compatible and have the same base. This inventory is in the completion stage and will be sent to members shortly.

After this inventory, standardization of instruments can take place. This would involve checking and standardizing member instruments to the "New" Consortium Master Instrument located at the US Dairy Forage Research Center. Members would use a 30-sample characterization set, sent to them by the Consortium, to re-standardize their instrument(s).

In carrying out diagnostics and reporting, members would be requested to send in routine ISI diagnostics as well as check sample analyses on a weekly basis. In the works for ease of reporting is a secure website in which members could confidentially enter information.

The check sample program would include a requirement of member labs or the Consortium to purchase 2 guaranteed check cells consisting of a forage and a feed. Again, check sample analysis reporting could be done at the same website as for diagnostics. A detailed outline of the Instrument Monitoring Program will be developed and released to Consortium members in the near future.

Next, the Executive Committee explained that the NIRS Instrument Specialist position is still being reviewed, as applicants are considered and the possibility of appointing a post-doctorate or a visiting scientist to the position for one or two years is considered. This second alternative is attractive because a highly qualified person could be appointed. Then, when instrument organization is on line, a long term NIRS Instrument Specialist could be hired and trained. A Memorandum of Understanding is under preparation between the USDFRC, the University of Wisconsin, and the NIRS Consortium in order to outline the needs of each party in a cooperative understanding of the duties and roles that the NIRS Instrument Specialist will perform.

The Forage Testing Conference Committee then described that a need has been identified to

develop a working paper on the science behind NIR in view of continuing popular press articles unfavorable to NIR. A core group of research nutritionists could be assembled to discuss these and other issues. Consortium members would be encouraged to attend and participate. A potential time frame for this Forage Testing Conference could be the last week of March or the First week of April, 2000, possibly to be held at the US Dairy Forage Research Center.

**The next Board Meeting will be held by conference call on December 13, 1999 at 10:00 a.m. Board Members and Consortium Members can participate in this open board meeting by dialing 608-265-1000 and entering code number 0864 at the prompt.** Consortium Members are encouraged to participate, and feedback and input are welcome. Voting, however, is limited to board members. Members may suggest items for the board meeting agenda as well, and may contact Patty Laskowski to do so.

## **Farewell to Mark Matteson**

Mark has decided to accept a position with Cargill in Minnesota beginning November 29, 1999. The Consortium thanks Mark for his work in making the Consortium a success and wishes him all the best in the future.

## **Announcements**

Any Consortium Member or Collaborator who wishes to make announcements or submit member news items is encouraged to do so. Please contact Patty Laskowski at the information below.

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