

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

NIRS Consortium Membership NEWS

February 8, 2000

January 20, 2000 Board Meeting

The Board of Directors meeting held on January 20, 2000 addressed the following items: (1) Membership Status, (2) Instrument Specialist Status, (3) Instrument Monitoring Program, and (4) Annual Meeting.

To date the NIRS Consortium consists of 19 participating members, plus collaborators at the University of Wisconsin, US Dairy Forage Research Center (USDFRC), and the University of Minnesota. All those present felt that consistency and timeliness are integral parts of the Consortium's success. Along these lines, Neal Martin summarized that a business manager, instrument specialist & researcher, and new dollars are all components that have been added or will be added shortly to the group. This means that activity is occurring and that momentum can be expected to increase. Dan Undersander and Mike Siedell both expressed how important membership participation is in achieving Consortium goals.

The discussion continued with an agreement that equation update and expansion is an important step to take to move the Consortium forward and reunify members. It was decided that a call for sample spectra from members would be appropriate at this time, in preparation for the new Instrument Specialist's arrival. See details below in section "Call For Sample Spectra".

Dan Undersander and Neal Martin provided an update on the Instrument Specialist position. Dan explained that good discussions have been taking place between the University of Wisconsin, the Consortium, and the University of Padova, Italy in reaching final agreements for Paolo Berzaghi to fill the position of Instrument Specialist/Researcher as a Visiting Scientist. At this point, Paolo plans to arrive in Madison on March 1, 2000 to begin work with the Consortium. See details about Paolo's background below.

The Instrument Monitoring Program status was discussed, in the context of making arrangements for Paolo to initiate and manage this program. With this in mind, a final draft has been completed of a Member Inventory Survey (an attachment to this newsletter). This survey will provide information on what versions of software, equations, and instrument models we as a consortium have.

Lastly, Dan, Neal, and Don Sapienza are drafting the annual meeting program. It was agreed that early April is the best time for most members to be able to attend. The meeting will be held at the USDA Dairy Forage Research Center in Madison, Wisconsin. A Forage Testing Conference will be held in conjunction with the Consortium Annual Meeting to discuss NIR science. Topics such as current and new NIRS methodology, laboratory proficiency, and accuracy of NIRS analysis of forages and feeds will be discussed. An outline of the program

and dates will be compiled and distributed shortly.

The next Board Meeting will be held by conference call on February 28, 2000 at 10:00 a.m. central time. 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.

Consortium Perspective

The Consortium has gone through dramatic changes in the past year in movement of the home base and in personnel. What this will ultimately achieve is a specialization of activities, separating technical and research from information management and membership coordination. Further, with collaborative efforts over the next two years from the University of Wisconsin, the USDFRC, and the University of Padova, scientific knowledge can be expanded with innovative application of NIRS made available to Consortium members. With this arrangement, members are still the center of the Consortium, whose participation on a regular basis is integral in the continued improvement of NIRS technology.

Expectations for immediate Consortium activity include a several-month long implementation of a web-based Consortium Instrument Monitoring Program. Standard Consortium equations are to be expanded and a Hay RUP equation is ready to be added to our package of available calibrations.

Addition of Dr. Paolo Berzaghi as Instrument Specialist and Researcher

Dr. Paolo Berzaghi has been appointed Instrument Specialist and Researcher to cooperate with the University of Wisconsin, the USDFRC, and the NIRS Consortium in order to develop NIRS applications. With the Consortium, Paolo will work with member instrument standardization and monitoring, and maintain and develop calibrations. Paolo will be a great asset to the Consortium because he will be able to utilize his previous expertise in NIRS in application to the Consortium.

Paolo was born in Savona Italy and graduated from the University of Padova in 1988 with a degree in Animal Science. After two separate scholarships to Virginia Tech, Paolo received his Masters degree in Dairy Science and then returned to the University of Padova in 1993 to complete his doctorate. He has continued at Padova as a researcher (with an interim three month Fulbright Scholarship in 1997 to Penn State) to study grazing systems, forage availability, particle size dynamics, as well as contribute much work on NIRS calibrations and standardizations. He has been involved in numerous publications related to forages, ruminants, and NIRS technology.

Upon his arrival on or about March 1, 2000, Paolo will serve as a Visiting Scientist for two years. His duties will be cooperative with the Consortium and the USDFRC. Paolo's first priority is to finalize and implement a Consortium Instrument Monitoring Program that will include (1) member instrument standardization, (2) instrument diagnostics evaluation and reporting, and (3) check sample evaluation and reporting. At this time an outline of the program is flexible and Paolo will finalize its development.

Along with this monitoring program implementation, Paolo will become acquainted with the Consortium, making himself available to get to know the members and answer questions. With the annual meeting in early

April, Paolo will be able to meet the membership in person and participate in the scientific dialogue. After this, Paolo will continue maintenance of equation expansion and begin work on developing an equation for the 24-hour digestion of unground corn silage. The remaining time with the Consortium, to complete two years, Paolo will spend maintaining the monitoring program, working on improving the Consortium's equation and service offerings, training an ongoing instrument specialist, and participating in scientific dialogue.

SPECIAL REQUESTS AND DOCUMENTS

Call For Sample Spectra

In order to monitor and expand our existing Consortium equations, all members please submit any spectra of samples that you may have collected, either that you had planned to send to Mark or that you have collected for other purposes. Attached to this newsletter you will find detailed instructions for submitting sets of spectra. ***We need participation from all members*** in order to produce equations representative of the entire Consortium. The plan is to compile and store these spectra in preparation for Paolo to analyze and expand the equations. Spectra files from each member should be sent by Email to Patty for collection. Please identify sets of spectra you have that will be appropriate and submit to Patty within two weeks. Paolo will then assess the spectra and determine which samples are of interest. After this, Paolo will determine which ground

samples will be needed further, so please save any physical samples associated with the spectra you send. Email information for submission of spectra to Patty is below and on the attached instructions as well.

Member Instrument Survey

Attached to this newsletter you will find a member instrument survey. This survey will inventory the instruments, equipment, software, capabilities, and equation versions that all members have. With this, Paolo will be able to coordinate and recommend if and where updates need to occur so that all Consortium members are compatible and have the same base. Please print out and complete the survey, then return to Patty by mail or fax within 2 weeks. Mail and fax information is below as well as on the survey itself.

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.

Patty Laskowski
NIRS Consortium Business Manager
8396 Yellowstone Drive
Marshfield, WI 54449

Ph: 715-387-2523 ext. 3010
Fax: 715-387-1723
Email: pmlaskowski@facstaff.wisc.edu