

ReproMoney: 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.
- ❖ Based on results from this tool, the team sets goals, develops an action plan, assigns responsibilities, and determines appropriate evaluation strategies for individual team members. (Figure 1)

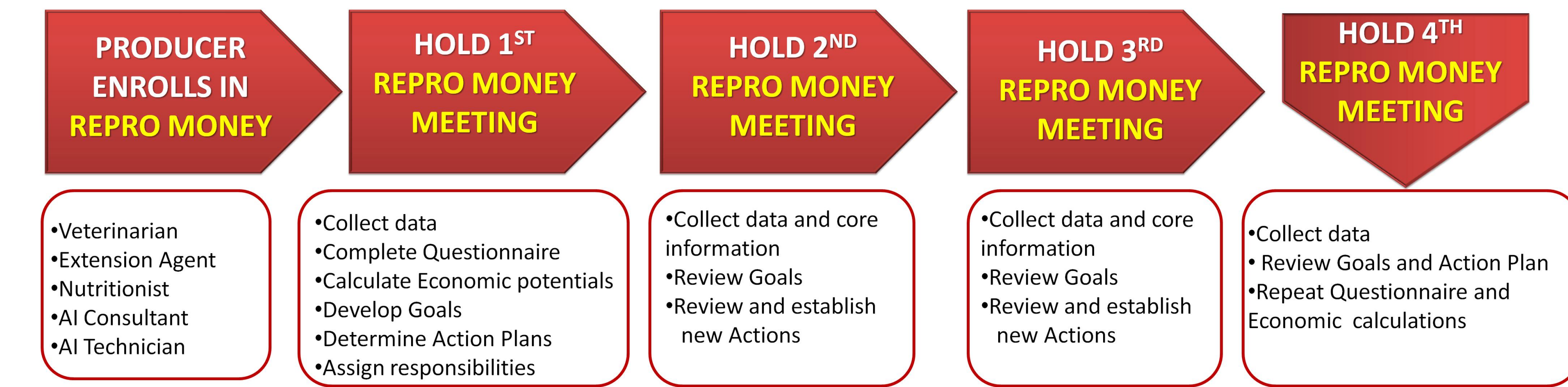


Figure 1. Flow chart of Repro Money meetings structure.

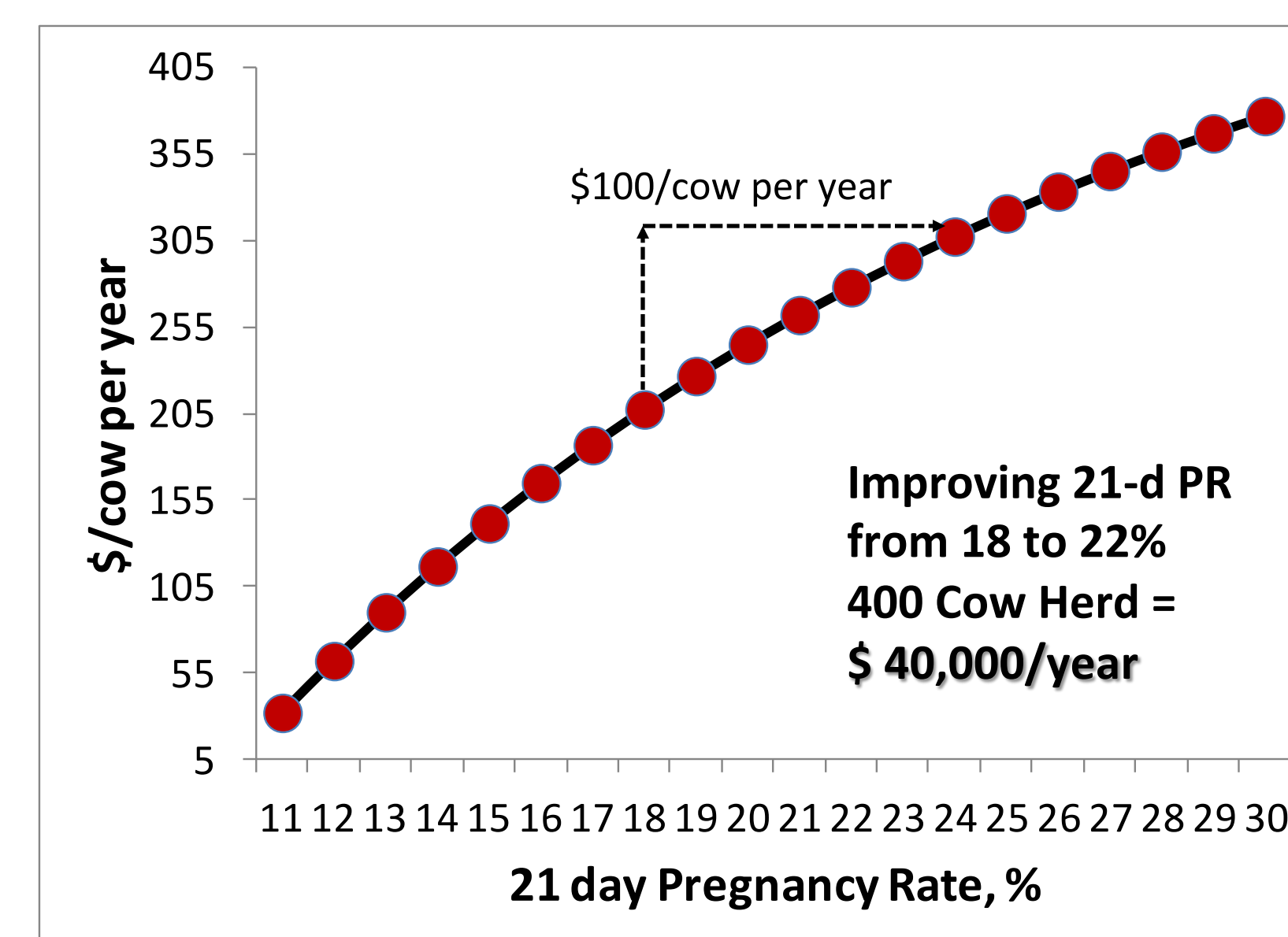
ECONOMIC ASSESMENT TOOLS

In order to assess the economic benefit of improving reproductive performance, and depending on the farm's needs, a set of economic decision support tools are used during the program (Figure 2 & 3)

Reproductive Program	Current	Start day	Alternative	Start day
1 st Service Postpartum	Presynch-Ovsynch-14	Tue	Presynch-Ovsynch-10	Thu
2 nd and Subsequent Services	Ovsynch	Tue	Ovsynch	Tue
Resynch before preg check	NO		NO	

Figure 2. UW-DairyRepro\$ and UW-DairyRepro\$ tools allow producers to compare net returns associated with current and alternative reproduction programs. For example a farmer could know the economic value of including a PreSynch protocol or using heat detection devices.

Figure 3. Expected monetary value of an improved 21 d pregnancy rate from current to goal



PILOT FARM CASE STUDY : Enge Meadowood Farm

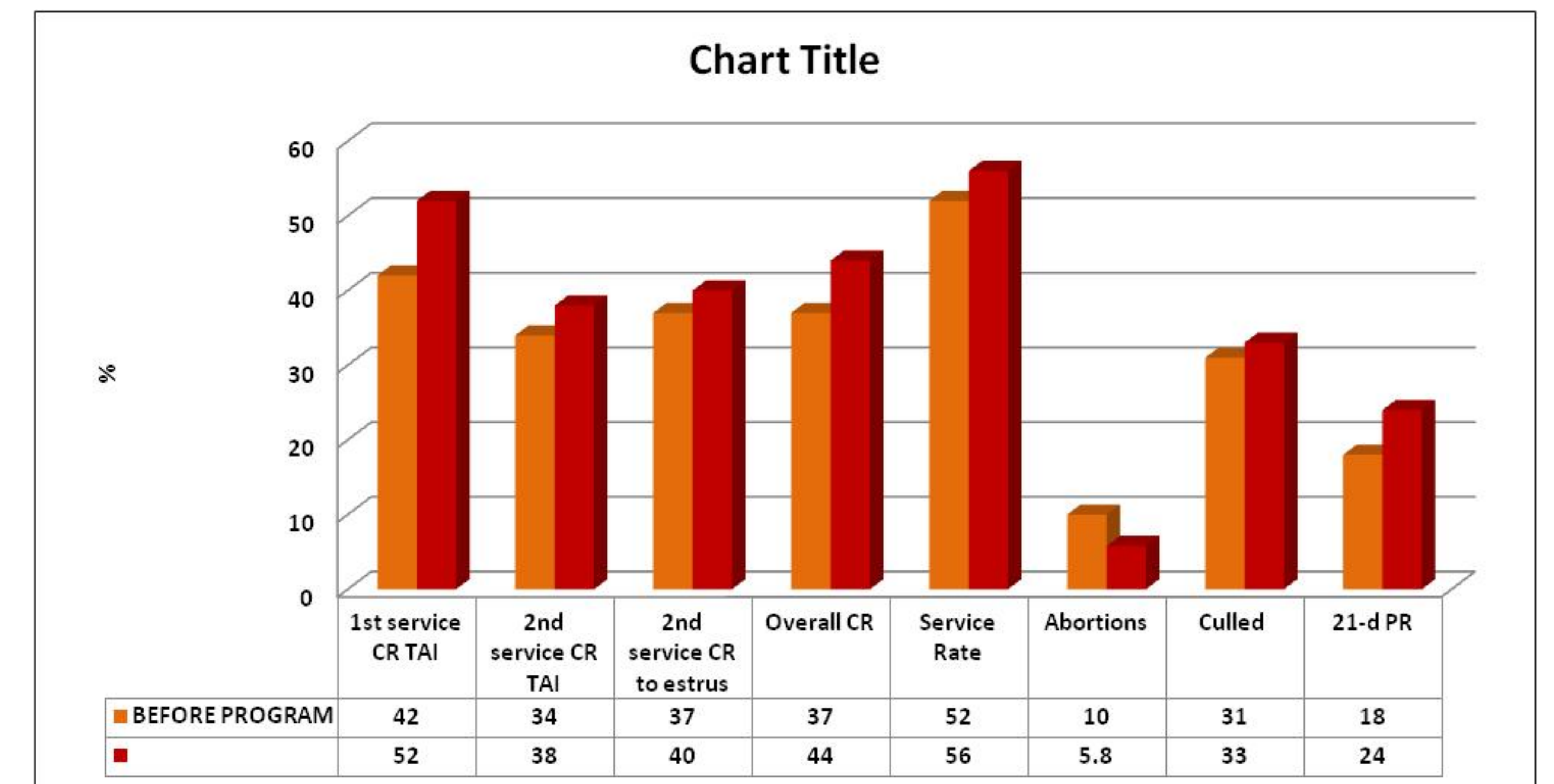
FARM CHARACTERISTICS

- ❖ Four hundred cow dairy located near Lodi, Wisconsin.
- ❖ The farm participated in the Repro Money Program between November 2010- May 2011.
- ❖ ME305 at the beginning of the program was 12,671 kg/cow with butterfat at 4% and protein at 3.2%.
- ❖ General reproductive program: Double Ovsynch for 1st service. Cows found open at pregnancy check were enrolled in the Ovsynch protocol. Cows found in heat in between synchronizations were inseminated.

IMPROVEMENTS MADE

- ❖ Modify timing of timed IA protocols: SPECIFICS

IMPROVED REPRODUCTIVE PERFORMANCE



ECONOMIC GAIN

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 that builds on existing professional relationships within the farm community. The case study demonstrate that this program is already having an impact in the farm community by changing knowledge, actions, and conditions in dairy farms' reproductive efficiency. Consequently participating farms are improving their economic performance and profitability.

Similar improvements are being documented in other participating farms...

RECRUITMENT METHODS AND FARM SELECTION CRITERIA:

All dairy farms in Wisconsin are eligible to participate in the Repro Money program. To aid in the enrolling process, efforts such as mailings to farmers, county agent newsletter and newspaper articles, webpage (<http://fyi.uwex.edu/repromoney/>) and a video testimonial were aimed at promoting the program in the farm community.