



The Babcock Institute

for International Dairy Research & Development

Looking Back Over the Years, Issue 1

In This Issue

The History of Babcock Institute

Welcome to the first issue of the Babcock Institute's "Looking Back Over The Years" newsletter series. In this issue, we provide highlights of Babcock Institute's greatest accomplishments over the years.

Memories from the Initial Years

Thanks for staying connected!
-The Babcock Team

Short Course Over The Years

The First of Many Cochran Groups

The History of Babcock Institute

Remembering Babcock Institute

Since 1991, the Babcock Institute has worked to link the dairy industries in Wisconsin and the U.S. with dairy industries around the world with the goal of improving quality of life and foster market development. As the leader in international dairy research, development, and education, the Institute has worked to transform emerging dairy industries and strengthen the U.S. dairy industry through customized dairy training programs, conferences, research, and market analysis. The Babcock Institute has hosted about 200 training programs for over 8,000 participants from around the world.

Quick Links

[About the Babcock Institute](#)

[Contact Us](#)

Memories from the Initial Years

The Babcock Institute was born in 1991 after Len Maurer prepared a quick proposal. Len got wind in 1991 of the possibility that Senator Herb Kohl's office could provide funding, but he needed a proposal within about 24 hours. Len called Dave Dickson who in turn delegated me to whip out a draft proposal. We did not have time to refine it so the first draft was what was turned in. The original scope was much of what has been maintained - a combination of extension, conferences, and publications as well as other outreach and sponsorship of several small UW research projects. These sponsored projects were mainly out of the Agricultural Economics program. We also supported some travel grants - Ken Albrecht, Dave Thomas, and Yves Berger come to mind. Everything was done with the goal of supporting the export industry and "servicing what we sell" with technical support. There was a seemingly non-stop sequence of visitors groups sponsored by USDA and others.

Michel Wattiaux was the very first hire before we even had space in Ag Hall. He took on the bulk of the publication development with great expertise, a huge amount of work and real dedication - the subsequent string of publications are due to his leadership and Karen's dedicated editing and input from many other authors and translators. It was only after developing the manuals for international use did we discover that the Short Courses were using them.

We also needed a logo in the early days. We were in a hurry to create one for a conference announcement and this was before Google Images and clip art so we hastily appropriated the cow from the Dairy Science Department letterhead and hand drew a globe around it - it survived 24 years.

- As told by Jane Homan, Initial Director of the Babcock Institute

Short Course Over The Years

One of the major programs Babcock Institute initiated was an international short course program. This program brought groups of people from all over the world to participate in two-week training program that includes lectures from university professors, farm tours, and hands-on workshops. Through the institute's efforts, sponsors, and the support of many people, Babcock Institute was able to host 17 international short courses with over 1,143 total participants over the years.

In 1998, The Babcock Institute in collaboration with World Dairy Expo hosted the first annual International Dairy Short Course, which became a consistent hallmark of the Babcock Institute's work drawing participants from around the world each year during World Dairy Expo. This first year, the course was offered in English with Spanish translation and had 30 attendees from Spain, Argentina, Colombia, Mexico, Panama, Costa Rica, Guatemala, the Dominican Republic, Chile, Ecuador, Venezuela, Puerto Rico, Honduras, and the Czech Republic. This first year, the course was hosted at the UW-Foundation Building on the UW-Madison campus. Course participants received lectures from UW-Madison professors David Combs, David Wieckert, Ric Grummer, Michel Wattiaux, Milo Wiltbank, Kent Wiegel, Bruce Jones, and Douglass Rienemann. Participants traveled with UW-Madison Professor Emeritus, David Wieckert, to Werner grazing farm and Crave Brothers' and Wieckert conventional farm after learning about WI dairy industry.

The course quickly grew and improved each year. The very next year the course had over 100 participants from around the world and was hosted at the Concourse Hotel (as it would be in the following years). This course included lectures, farm visits to both conventional and grazing farms, and workshops on the UW-Madison campus. This mix of lectures and practical hands-on learning experiences received such a positive response, the course continued to use this format.

Every year the course has drawn participants from around the world and brought them together in a single place to learn best practices from experts in Wisconsin's dairy industry. Participants have given us feedback about the value of the course and every year participants comment that they hoped we would continue to host the course every year. As participants this year reflected on their experience with the course in its last and final year, their comments included: "this course is able to bring the world together: the course content was informative and the information was high quality" and "this is the best practical short course available for producers, professionals and buyers worldwide." [\[Read more\]](#)

Celebrating the USDA Cochran Programs

The Babcock Institute has had a long-standing partnership with the USDA FAS Cochran Fellowship Program. The Institute began hosting training programs for Cochran Fellows in 1997. The partnership continued through this year. In partnership with Cochran, the Babcock Institute has hosted customized trainings for more than 50 participants from 16 different countries focused on a range of topics, including milk quality, dairy herd management, farm management, reproduction, herd health management, milk processing, food safety and regulation and much more. The Babcock Institute planned and implemented these short course trainings on the University of Wisconsin-Madison campus with the help world-renowned professors and UW-Extension experts, who provided lectures, hands-on workshops and practical training opportunities for the participants. The Institute's relationships with area farms also allowed for participants to have practical experiences that support what they learned on the UW campus. The Babcock Institute's ultimate goal in hosting individuals from all over the world was to provide an ideal setting for high quality comprehensive training programs and foster relationships to improve communication among international dairy farmers, educate international farmers to improve dairy herd management around the world, and enhance overall farming techniques to encourage good farming practices for food and farmer safety. [\[Read more\]](#)

A few highlights from the Cochran groups:

1997 - Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan

This program was held for a group of four dairy and beef-related technologists, engineers and veterinarians. This program was part of a nine-day tour of Iowa, Wisconsin, and Illinois. This program focused on agricultural economics, cooperatives, milk and cheese pricing, business management, marketing, quality control and food safety. [\[Read more\]](#)

2008 - Tunisia and Algeria

This program was held for six government officials representing the Ministries of Agriculture of Algeria and Tunisia. While on campus the visitors took a tour of the



Babcock Hall Dairy Processing Plant, heard a lecture on meat quality standards in the U.S., discussed carcass handling and safety requirements, testing, and other related topics at the UW-Madison Meat Science and Muscle Biology Laboratory. [\[Read more\]](#)



2013 - Dominican Republic, Bolivia and Peru

This program was held for a group of ten fellows in conjunction with World Dairy Expo. The fellows took part in lectures, industry meetings at World Dairy Expo and visited farms. They met with Wisconsin Department of Trade and Consumer Protection to discuss the implementation of a system for good agricultural practices and much more. [\[Read more\]](#)

Remembering Babcock Institute

As a consequence of the elimination of federal funding for the Institute through USDA Special Grants, the Babcock Institute will suspend its operations as of December 31st this year. Since 1991, the Institute has coordinated outreach programs, hosted international visitors, developed training materials, and fostered research partnerships with individuals and organizations in more than 80 countries. Priceless relationships have been established and nurtured, and the Institute has built connections between UW-Madison, Wisconsin farmers and agribusinesses, Wisconsin government offices, and the global dairy industry. While we are very saddened by this news, we would also like to celebrate the Institute's many accomplishments over the years and thank all those who have supported us in linking the dairy industries of Wisconsin and the U.S. with dairy industries around the world to improve quality of life and foster market development.

Celebration of Babcock Institute

We encourage you to attend our Celebration of Babcock Institute next week Thursday, December 11th from 2:30-5 PM at DeJope Residence Hall (640 Elm Drive, Madison, WI) in the Mendota Room on the University of Wisconsin-Madison campus. We will talk about the history of the Babcock Institute and thank all of the generous donors who made the Babcock Institute happen. Additionally, we would like to recognize UW faculty and UW-Extension experts who taught a numerous amount of lectures to our foreign visitors. Finally, we would like to thank the farms and companies that graciously hosted our visitors and taught them about a variety of topics from dairy herd management to milk quality. Check out this [map](#) for parking information.

Stay Connected

As the Babcock Institute comes to a close, we encourage you to stay connected with the University of Wisconsin-Madison's resources. Please check out our [website](#) to find any resources you may need. The website will disappear after a few months and we wouldn't want you to miss any information. You may also contact Karen (knielsen@cals.wisc.edu) with any questions. Check out our [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages to stay up-to-date on recognitions and final words!

Karen Nielsen
Director

Alex Allweiss
Assistant

Jaime Sawle
Communications Intern

