

## **ARS-USDA Signs Agreement with the Council on Dairy Cattle Breeding**

The agreement has been signed allowing the transition of genetic evaluations from USDA to the Council on Dairy Cattle Breeding, according to Jay Mattison, Council vice chair. Called the Non-funded Cooperative Agreement between the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) of USDA and the Council, it was presented to the industry last summer and has been the subject of ongoing discussion and debate. With the agreement in place, the production of genetic evaluations and management reports will begin to be moved from AIPL (Animal Improvement Programs Laboratory) to the Council.

For its part the Council has retained a small team with long experience, headed by Dr Duane Norman recently retired as head from AIPL. They will be involved with producing the April genetic evaluations including genomic information.

Beginning with the April evaluations, breeders will be able to obtain genomic evaluations on their own bulls as well as their females. The Council has announced the fee schedules that will be in place, and the revenue from those fees will be used to offset some of the costs of producing the genetic evaluations going forward. (See item elsewhere)

Holstein Association USA President Chuck Worden reports that the Association was not notified that the agreement has been signed, although the Association had participated in the Council meeting approving the document over Holstein's objections. The vote at that meeting in October was 7 in favor, two opposing (the Association and Agri-Tech Analytics). Further, he said that until there are certain documents signed between the Association and the Council safeguarding Holstein data, the Association would not be participating.