



ReproMoney: A Farmer-Directed Team-Based Extension Program to Improve Reproductive Performance in Wisconsin Dairy Herds

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EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION AND DISCOVERY

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 and assigns responsibilities for individual team members. (Figure 1)

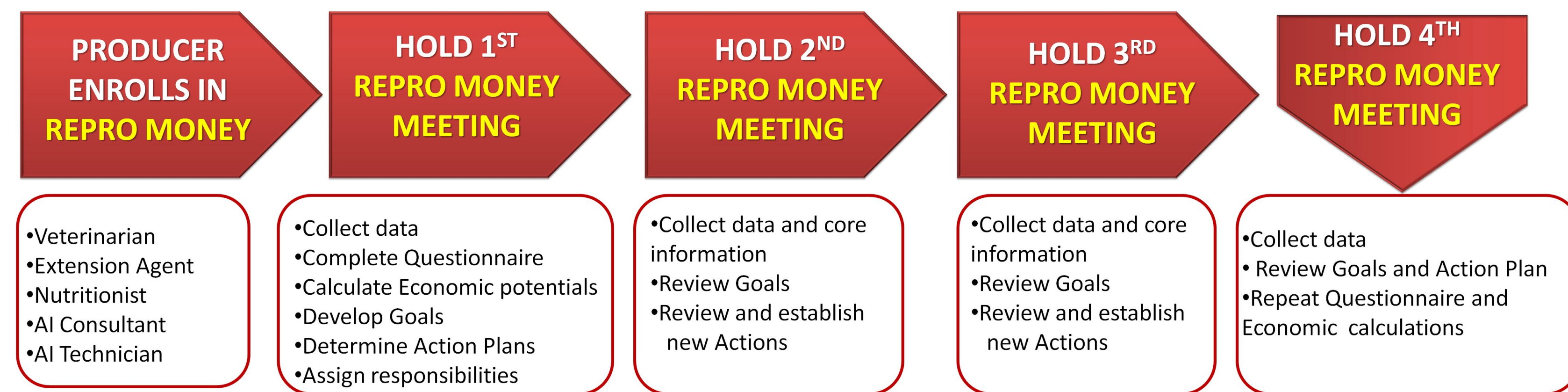


Figure 1. Flow chart of Repro Money meetings structure.

ECONOMIC ASSESMENT TOOLS

To assess the economic benefit of improving reproductive performance based on the needs of individual farms, 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.

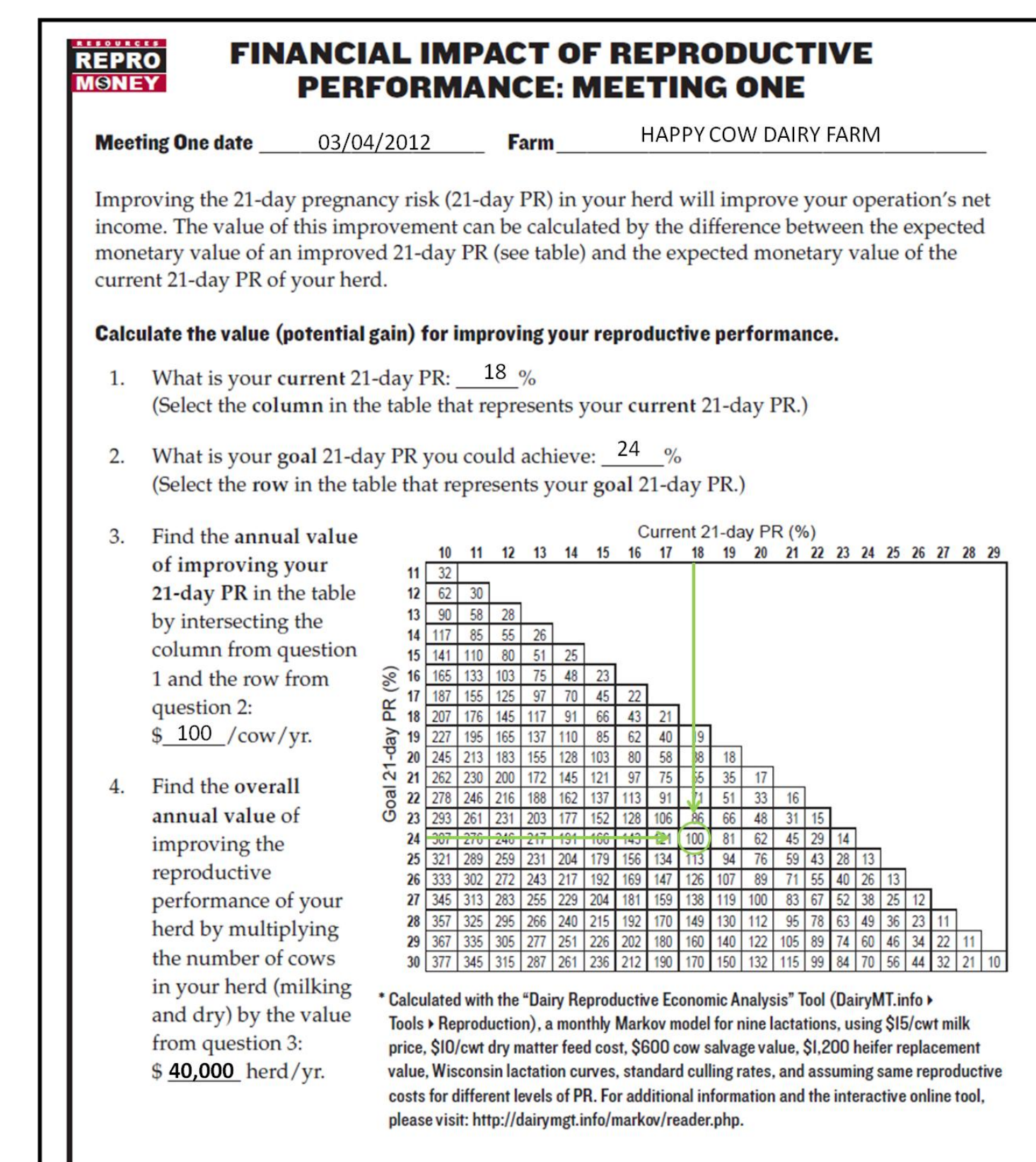


Figure 3. Expected monetary value of an improved 21 d pregnancy rate from current to goal

PILOT FARM CASE STUDY

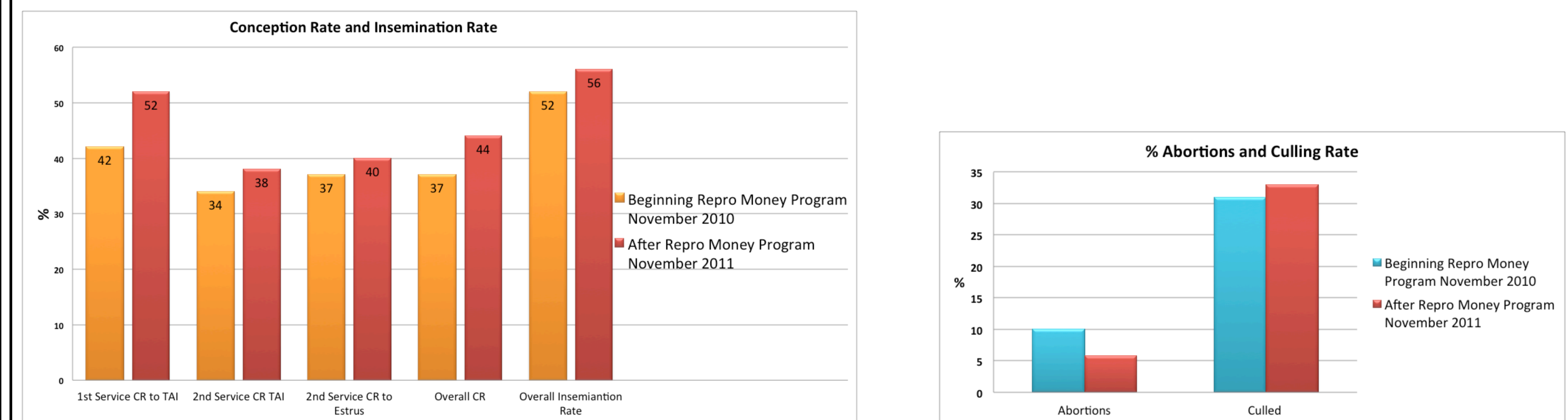
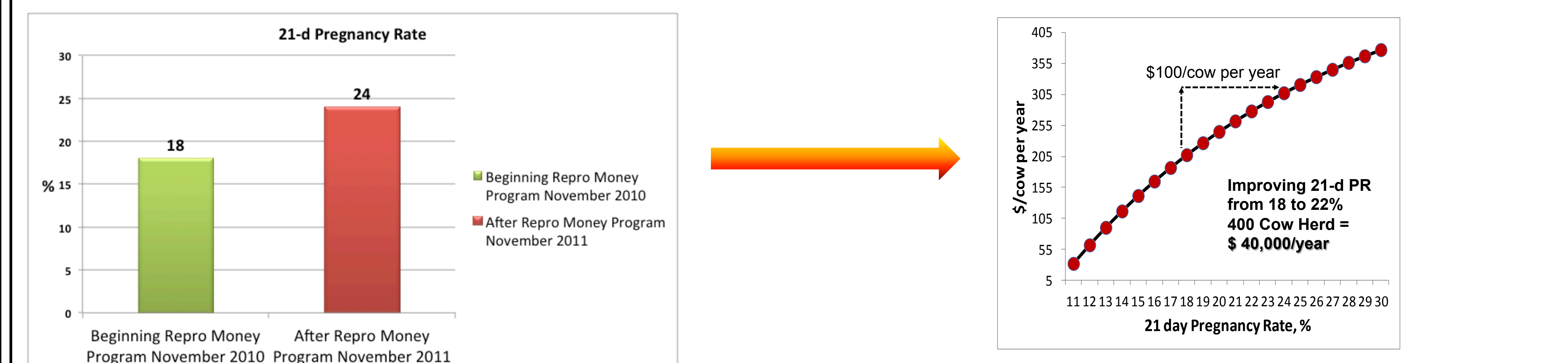
FARM CHARACTERISTICS

- ❖ Dairy farm milking 400 cows located near Lodi, Wisconsin.
- ❖ The farm participated in the Repro Money Program between November 2010 and May 2011.
- ❖ ME305 at the beginning of the program was 12,671 kg/cow with 4% butterfat and 3.2% protein.
- ❖ General reproductive program: Double Ovsynch protocol for first service. Cows diagnosed open at pregnancy check are enrolled in an Ovsynch protocol for second and greater service. Cows detected in estrus between synchronizations were inseminated.

IMPROVEMENTS MADE

- ❖ Started recording and classifying cystic cows and treating with a 7-d CIDR Synch protocol
- ❖ Changed their protocol from Ovsynch-48 to Ovsynch-56 to improve timing of AI relative to ovulation
- ❖ Focus on their transition cow management: came up with standard operating procedures, observed the transition group twice a day, made stall changes and added 15% more bedding to stalls.

IMPROVED REPRODUCTIVE PERFORMANCE AND ECONOMIC GAINS



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. This case study demonstrates that the Repro Money program is having an impact in the farm community by changing knowledge, actions, and conditions in dairy farms' reproductive efficiency. Thus participating farms are improving their economic performance and profitability.
- ❖ Similar improvements are being documented for 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.