
ICAR Welcome

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Welcome to the 36th meeting of the International Committee for Animal Recording biennial session held in the United States of America for the first time ever. This historic event is hosted by National DHIA which is an association of 20 DHI affiliates throughout the U.S. that promotes accuracy, credibility, and uniformity of DHI records. National DHIA represents the DHI system on issues involving other National and International organizations and they organize industry activities that benefit members of the association.

We welcome you to Niagara Falls, New York, where you will be partnering with other like-minded organizations from around the globe.

We welcome you to the Niagara area where two friendly neighbors (Canada & the U.S.A.) live and work closely together. The Niagara experience is one of scenic beauty and awesome spectacular water falls. You will experience the majestic roar of the Horseshoe Falls, the mist at your face as you walk under the Bridal Falls and the once-in-a-lifetime experience as you view the falls from the catwalk.

Your ICAR planning committee is from the National DHIA staff spearheaded by Jay and Mary Mattison. Their group consists of Steven Seivert, JoDee Sattler, Leslie Thoman, and David Harrison.

Another person that is playing a key role as your host this week is National DHIA president, Dan Sheldon. Dan and his family own and operate a 900 cow dairy in eastern New York. Besides being president of NDHIA he is also a member of several farmer-owned and operated boards of director's organizations which includes Dairy One, the DHI affiliate that operates in 13 northeastern states in the U.S.

Of course we want to thank one of our key industry partners, CanWest DHI, and their general manager, Neil Petreny, who is also the ICAR president for his role in helping us organize this week's events.

Western New York is a large geographical land mass located 6-8 hours to the east of New York City. Western New York is an area that is home to the "Fingers Lakes Region" where seven long narrow lakes create the look of fingers stretched across a land mass. The Finger Lakes area is known for its water sports, hiking trails, scenic beauty, diverse agriculture operations, dairy farms, grape vineyards and the second largest winery area in the U.S. behind California.

Sporting activities in western New York include the Buffalo Sabres professional hockey team, the Buffalo Bills professional American Football team where any given Sunday in the autumn time of the year they play before a sold-out crowd of more than 75 000 people in the Ralph Wilson Stadium located approximately 30 miles from this conference center. Of course, with any pro football team that also means there is the cheerleader squad and in this case, they are known as the Buffalo Jills and they make numerous promotional appearances throughout Western New York.

If food is on your menu, Western New York is the home of buffalo hot wings. They are an addicting little food item that usually comes back to get you the next day when you eat too much the night before.

And if you visit Western New York in the wintertime it is the one of the heaviest areas for snow density in the Continental U.S. On the average, over 10 feet of snow descends on the area as “lake effect” snowstorms are the norm for this region of the country.

Western New York is also home to one of the most prestigious centers for higher education in the world, Cornell University. Cornell is located in Ithaca, New York which is on the south end of Cayuga Lake one of the Finger Lakes. Cornell is one of two private-land grant universities in the U.S. founded in 1865 that has approximately 20 000 students enrolled and a member of the prestigious Ivy League of schools located in the Northeastern U.S.

And of course, Western New York is the home of many dairy farms. From small 20-40 cow Mennonite herds milked in stanchions to large 3-5 000 cow herds that are milked in large parallel or rotary parlors. This week you will be able to witness some of these operations first hand when we tour the countryside.

In the U.S. last year over 186 billion pounds of milk was produced. The top ten states for milk production are in order; California, Wisconsin, New York, Idaho, Pennsylvania, Minnesota, Texas, New Mexico, and Washington. This type of production came from a national dairy herd that numbers 9 153 000 cows. California again leads the way with over 1.8 million cows followed by Wisconsin, New York, Pennsylvania, Idaho, Minnesota, Texas, Michigan, New Mexico and finalizing the top ten is Ohio. Major shifts are taking place within the cow population figures as states like Idaho, New Mexico and Indiana are experiencing huge growth numbers. More detail about the dairy and agricultural industry will follow from several of our key-note speakers this week.

As you spend some time in the U.S. and specifically here at Niagara Falls, you are in the midst of an area that is referred to as the Great Lakes. The Great Lakes are a chain of freshwater lakes located on or within the Canada-United States border. Consisting of Lakes Superior, Michigan, Huron, Erie, and Ontario, they form the largest group of freshwater lakes on Earth that represents over 22% of the freshwater available in the world.

And the best part that I enjoy about the Great Lakes is the fantastic fishing opportunities that it presents! And, if you happen to be out on one of the Great Lakes fishing sometime, you just may have the opportunity to rub shoulders with other people from around the world, that not only enjoy this great sport, they also enjoy the wonderful world of animal recording.

Welcome to the ICAR meetings here in Niagara Falls, New York and I hope your week is fun, educational and entertaining!