

# NALMA

## North American Lab Managers Association

How it was formed and its working  
purpose

### *1970's a time of change*

- Automation \ infrared replacing traditional Babcock methods
- Personnel lacked expertise to operate, calibrate and repair
- Manufacturer support and communication with lab was poor

## *Communication between Laboratories*

- Labs are isolated by geography – limited communication
- Even though NDHIA covered all 50 states, written communication from NDHIA was limited to policy
- Sharing information to improve performance and accuracy was limited to regions
- Small labs were left out completely

## **The Beginning**

- Large labs began to communicate to solve problems
- four lab managers realize a national program was needed
- Lab Managers Association
- Changed the name to NALMA in 1978

## Mission Statement

The Lab Managers' Association exists to further the cause, technique, and practice of milk analysis through increased communication and concerted action among lab managers.

In order to carry out that Purpose, the Lab Managers' Association will: with National DHIA, publish a newsletter to promote discussion of technology, safety, personal management, quality control, and other topics of interest to the dairy industry, where DHI lab people can have impact.

Furthermore, the Lab Managers' Association will:

Act in an advisory capacity giving input to National DHIA on topics related to laboratory functions and the Lab Workshops.

## Workshop/Meeting

- 1978 the first NALMA workshop is held in conjunction with NDHIA managers meeting
- Early emphasis was on instruments
  - Operation
  - Calibration
  - Repair
  - Training personnel

## Expanded Agenda

- Emerging technologies
- Lab efficiency\design
- Sample preparation
  - Log in
  - Tempering
  - Retesting
  - Vial selection
- Personnel management
  - Hiring
  - Firing
  - Training
  - Evaluating
  - Disciplinary action
- Safety
  - Chemicals
  - MSDS Sheets
  - Manuals

- Trade show was added for manufacturers to showcase products
- Laboratory profile
  - Virtual tour
  - Innovations in use
  - Another source of information
  - Travel without leaving your seat
- Motivational Speakers
  - Time management
  - Improving communication skills
  - Understanding and Managing different personalities

# Tours and Hands on Training

- Onsite tours of local labs and manufacturing facilities add to the educational value of the workshop
- Hands on training for repair





## Timeline of innovations

- 1979 Somatic Cell Counting instruments installed in labs
  - Replaced the CMT method
  - Train technicians to operate, calibrate and repair

- **1981** the “B” filter was an option for Butterfat analysis  
Beginning of “A” vs “B” filter controversy
- **1982** computers are installed for data capture  
HP 85/83  
TRS-80  
Televideo
- **1983** California DHIA manager, Martin Wilson presented standard sample program used by state
  - Was later used a basis for NDHIA unknown sample program

## **1984**

NALMA group was instrumental in design and implementation of QC program which evolved into the program we use today

## **1985**

Bronopol was introduced as a safer replacement for potassium dichromate for preserving milk samples

- **1987** The Netherlands lab profile introduces North America to advanced laboratory automation
- **1991** NALMA goes to an 18 month meeting schedule
- Bentley Instruments introduces Somacount 300
- **1993** Paul Sauve' presents the "Canadian Lab Accreditation" program at the workshop -this would serve as stepping stone to becoming the lab QC auditor

- **1995** NDHIA removed all boundaries for DHIA service
  - Increased competition will drive down price and increase quality
  - This created an atmosphere that discouraged sharing information for the common good. Associations quit providing information on topics they felt gave them a competitive advantage.
  - *NALMA focused on science, rather than politics*



## 1996 NIR for MUN analysis

- NALMA is driving force behind establishing reference method for calibration
- Encourages NDHIA to add MUN data to monthly unknown program

1997-1998 Chemspec, CL10, Fiastar, Skalar are introduced as alternative method of analysis of MUN

## 2000 - 2007


- FTIR technology
- Delta Instruments introduces new line of instruments
- SOP's become part of QC to ensure consistent lab practices for present and future staff
- Central Counties DHIA robotics to process samples

## Committees

- Laboratory Advisory Committee
- Quality Control
- New Instrument Protocol
- Guidelines for QC auditor selection process

## Contacts

- Acquaintances met at these workshops have later become critical contacts when building or remodeling facilities, evaluating equipment to purchase or adding additional analysis such as forage or MUN.
- These contacts and their level of expertise have saved many lab managers from reinventing the wheel or costly mistakes already experienced by others.



*As technology continues to evolve, NALMA workshops will serve as an outlet for education and an opportunity to showcase new products and services.*