

Al Kertz

Executive Vice President

The American Registry of Professional Animal Scientists



3 open minutes

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The American Registry of Professional Animal Scientists (ARPAS) provides certification of animal scientists through examination, continuing education and a commitment to a code of ethics.

Progressive Dairy Editor Kimmi Devaney spoke with Al Kertz, the organization's executive vice president, about the certification process and the value ARPAS brings to the dairy industry.

Q What is ARPAS?

A KERTZ: ARPAS is a third-party professional certification organization founded primarily by university faculty animal scientists. It took 10 years for the organization to be formalized, and it now is nearly 40 years old. There are five scientific organizations affiliated with ARPAS: American Dairy Science Association, American Meat Science Association, American Society of Animal Science, Equine Science Society and Poultry Science Association. Specializations are offered in these areas: aquaculture, beef cattle, companion animals, dairy cattle, feed management, goats, horses, poultry, sheep, swine, dairy products science and poultry products science. All members receive the *Applied Animal Science* journal.

Q What is the value of this certification to the dairy industry?

A KERTZ: Members who qualify have the designation "PAS" (Professional Animal Scientist) behind their name indicating they have qualified as an ARPAS member. Dairy producers will then know whomever they are dealing with has made this commitment to maintain their professionalism and commitment to integrity. In today's world, where transparency and integrity are critical, being an ARPAS member reflects a commitment to being kept up-to-date professionally and committing to honesty and credibility. Your physician and veterinarian have such a commitment and standing, so why not your dairy professional who works with you?

Q Tell us about the certification process and required qualifications.

A KERTZ: Individuals can become certified by passing the qualifying exam and committing annually to a code of ethics. Generally, anyone with an undergraduate degree in animal science can be certified as a Professional Animal Scientist (PAS) after passing a qualifying exam in that specie area, such as in dairy. The mandatory exam covers areas across disciplines such as nutrition, physiology, reproduction, management and genetics. Additionally, board certification is available for those having post-graduate degrees and meeting further experience and expertise levels. There is another newer process for Highly Qualified Individuals (HQI) to become a member through a nomination and review process. The exam is proctored and has been converted from a primarily in-person printed exam to an online one. Study materials are available on the ARPAS website along with sample questions.

Q What is required to maintain certification, and how much does it cost?

A KERTZ: Annual dues are currently \$125. All members are required to accumulate and submit 16 CEUs annually. There are a wide range of online and in-person programs and conferences that qualify on the local, regional and national levels. Qualifying programs are listed on the ARPAS website.

Q Tell us about members' career paths and industry specialties.

A KERTZ: Members' professions range from academia (university teaching, research, extension) to allied industry roles (research, technical service, marketing, sales) to government and regulatory, veterinarians, consultants specializing in a variety of fields and more. Dairy producers who have completed an undergraduate program or higher and pass the qualifying exam are also eligible to be members of ARPAS.

Q Where can readers find more information about the organization and how it may benefit them?

A KERTZ: They can learn more by visiting the ARPAS website (www.arpas.org) or by contacting me at andhil@swbell.net or (314) 495-8939.

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