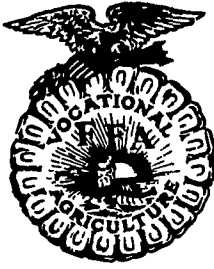


**From Local Ag Teachers:**



# Thoughts in Passing



The article for this week was prepared by Donald M. Robinson, Adult Farmer advisor at Garden Spot High School.

**Developing A Feeding Plan**

Recently Dr. Richard Adams, dairy specialist and head of the Penn state forage testing laboratory, spoke to the Garden Spot Young Farmers on developing a feeding plan for your livestock, and his comments are worth summarizing.

With higher-than-ever feed prices we cannot be bound to tradition to feeding the same feed we have been used to if it is not the most economical source of production and gain. In the ever challenging race to increase production we sometimes do it at the expense of profit. It is possible that the ration that gives the highest production may not always be the most profitable.

Developing a feeding plan involves three basic steps. First, the nutritional needs of the livestock must be determined based on age, size, and production level. In determining needs, be complete - not just energy and protein, but minerals and fiber as well.

Secondly, after nutritional needs have been calculated, all forages fed should be analyzed for energy, protein, fiber, and minerals. Forage intake must also be carefully measured. Many production difficulties come from feeding inadequate

amounts of forage or a low quality forage.

And third, once needs have been determined and forages analyzed to see how much of these needs are being met by the forages, the nutrients still needed must then be made up with supplemental feeds. It is at this point that much attention to cost must be given and the use of alternative sources of protein and energy considered. Use of non-protein nitrogen such as urea, anhydrous ammonia, urea-molasses mixes, use of cheaper grains or grain by-products, or dealer pre-mixes can be the answer for lower feed costs if carefully considered. But great care must be exercised to be sure the resulting feeds meet your livestock's needs and are not being fed at toxic levels. This is where a competent feed dealer, Extension service personnel or a vo-ag instructor can be of great assistance to you.

Probably the cheapest way to cut feed costs is to produce and feed quality roughages, especially hay. Another consideration while thinking about roughages is the relative amounts of each forage being fed. For dairy, all corn silage or all hay rations can lead to serious production and health problems in the herd in spite of apparent initial success in the early stages of such a feeding program. This is particularly true with dry cows. Large mineral imbalances can occur that will have far reaching effects.

I might add these thoughts to those brought out by Dr. Adams: The forage analysis is just

another tool that farm managers have to use as the business of agriculture becomes more sophisticated. But, do not be deceived, at best the analysis and resulting feeding plan are merely guides or starting points - and recommendations must be carried out and tempered with experience and a watchful eye to the livestock response in production and health.

## Health Care Pamphlets Being Distributed To Rural Residents

The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture is cooperating with the National Foundation - March of Dimes in distributing literature to rural residents on health and baby care, it was announced by Agriculture Secretary Jim McHale.

The Secretary said that regional personnel in the department's Bureau of Rural Affairs are contacting farmers and residents in remote rural areas to give them educational pamphlets and health charts prepared by the March of Dimes.

"Many of these people haven't been to a doctor in years," said McHale. "The March of Dimes in an effort to prevent birth defects

has prepared some excellent literature on pre-natal care and on keeping family health records."

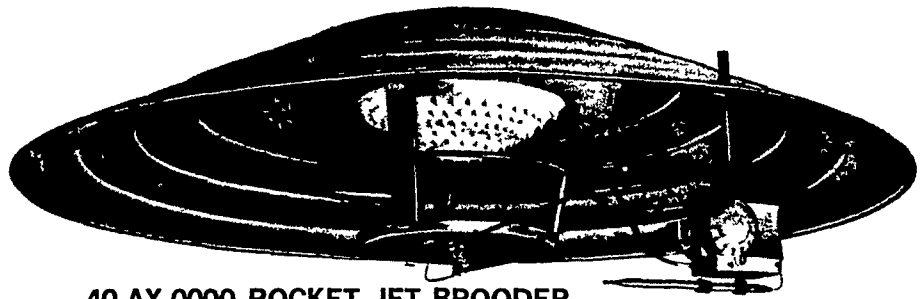
McHale said the literature encourages expectant mothers to visit available clinics or doctors, instructing them on what family health records to prepare for their visits.

One pamphlet details the diet an expectant mother should follow, and lists complications which would prompt immediate medical attention.

"We have to realize," said McHale, "that many rural residents have never heard of blood types or bladder infections and so forth. The information capsulized by the March of Dimes should prove invaluable."

McHale said the distribution is being handled by the rural coordinators located in the department's seven regional offices.

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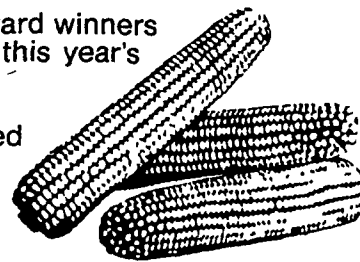
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