

Feeding changes

(Continued from Page 1)

fibres are also being blamed for problems. Some doubts are being raised about the trend to more and more shelled corn as opposed to utilizing the corn and the cob

Such facts as well as a brief assessment of the dairy industry's future were presented last week by Don Ace, dairy specialist at Penn State, in a talk given before approximately 60 veterinarians, nutritionists, and agri-businessmen from Lancaster, York and surrounding counties. The occasion was the third annual Dairy Seminar on Feeding and Health held here at the Quality Courts Inn.

Ace sees grain prices softening slightly when compared to prices a year ago; no improvement is seen in beef prices; milk production is down by one per cent which should help to keep milk prices up; butter and cheese are in low supply and being consumed as rapidly as they are produced; skim powder is overflowing the bins; imports are not expected to increase, and the blend price for milk is seen at above \$10.00 per hundredweight.

Going into more detail, the Penn State dairy scientist cited this year's record corn crop as being of excellent quality; soybean supplies are up 17 per cent; world production of feed grains is up four per cent, and with reduced dairy supplies this should all add up to a better future for dairymen. Ace was reluctant to go out on the limb with the dairy import question, however, when a member of the audience asked about it. Although he sees no increases in import levels, he added it is difficult to predict something like that because government actions and intentions present something of a guessing game to economists.

Ace continued his commentary, entitled "Sex and the Hungry Cow," by proclaiming that "many dairymen have to take a pretty hard look at their management practices."

"Many feed companies and many nutritionists are taking a second look at lead feeding," he claimed. Studies have shown, he noted, that some dairymen have fed grain to their cows in amounts as high as two

per cent of animal's body weight per day prior to freshening. This is wrong, scientists now announce. Experiments have shown the practical maximum for this type feeding is 0.5 per cent of the cow's bodyweight per day, Ace said. Amounts exceeding this level may (and often do) result in problems, particularly retained placentas. Advising that dairymen should aim for greater grain intake after freshening, Ace noted that it would result in better health and greater productivity. He also recommended lower grain feeding levels at the end of lactations.

Fibre is the most important thing in the cow's diet, Ace stressed, to the accompaniment of a couple of raised eyebrows. He explained that this "lack of fibre" problem is compounded when low quality forages are fed and dairymen seek to make up for that shortcoming by feeding more protein. "Cows need good, digestible fibre," he exclaimed, "for a good working gut."

On an overall basis, Ace suggested that cows have a dry matter intake equivalent to about three per cent of their body weight. At peak production this ratio of dry matter per bodyweight should increase to about 3.75 per cent; and for dry cows and heifers it's about two per cent. A digestive tract free of abnormality, and with adequate fibre moving through it has an effect on butterfat tests, he remarked.

Eyebrows were raised again when Ace told the audience that he wouldn't throw the corn cob away if he were dairying. According to Penn State experiments, leaving the corn cob in the field amounts to losing 20 per cent of the corn's feed value. Ace said the corn cob is a good source of fibre - palatable and digestible - and "you gain nothing by throwing it away."

Acknowledging that ear corn does not fit into everyone's management program today, and that the textbooks do not indicate any particular value for the cob, he stood by his statements and added that "the cow does not believe the textbook." In other words, cows are finding something valuable in the cob which textbooks do not show.

Herds with low fat tests have been on the increase in

recent years, according to findings at Penn State. Ace listed insufficient fibre, poor quality fibre, extra thin cows, fat cows, extremely fine ground feeds, and pelleted feeds as potential causes for low fat tests.

Fat cows cause more problems than thin cows, Ace noted. "If the cow is over-conditioned, the ration needs to be looked at," he said. Aside from scrutinizing the feeds themselves, Penn State dairy specialists also cite fat tests, appetite, manure, urine, haircoat, udder congestion, retained afterbirth, condition of offspring, reproduction efficiency, and condition of the animal as being indicators of a feed's value and effectiveness.

Corn silage is good feed, Ace said, but some individuals are feeding too much of it. "Anytime you concentrate an ingredient you increase the chance for problems because of the greater chances for imbalance," he warned.

Ace said "you don't want to see the feed moving through the cows too fast or too slow," and added that a number of things affect appetite, including barn ventilation. Imbalances of minerals, vitamins, and protein cause appetite problems - excess amounts are as harmful as too little. Speaking on trace minerals specifically, Ace stressed the importance of not "doubling up" on trace mineral sources. "If you get them in the salt, don't get them again in something else," he suggested. He noted that such a problem has become rather critical in some herds, and that "we're finding too many herds which are fed more than needed amounts of trace minerals."

Another topic Ace discussed is mastitis and milk quality. He stressed the necessity of low leucocyte counts, claiming that a count of 1.5 million may reduce production by as much as 40 per cent. A count of 800,000

Hershey wins creed contest

Steven L. Hershey, son of Mr. and Mrs. Donald Hershey, Manheim R6, captured first place in the Creed Contest, held Oct. 30 at Hinkletown Alternative School in conjunction with the annual Lancaster County FFA Leadership Training Conference.

In the contest, greenhand FFA'ers were judged on their ability in public speaking as well as how well they knew the creed. Steve was presented his award during a banquet held in the Blue Ball Fire Hall following the conference.

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Members of a fox hunt in Belton, England, learned why the fox got away and spoiled their day. The man who showed up and blew the wrong calls on the hunting horn was a spy from the League Against Cruel Sports.

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Speaking of New York City's attempt to solve its financial mess with taxes on more forms of legalized gambling, Red Smith in his New York Times column, made this pertinent observation: "American politicians have a single solution for fiscal crises - tax sin."

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One may go wrong in many different directions, but right in only one.

Aristotle

cuts production by around 20 per cent, he noted. To help reduce incidents of mastitis, Penn State may be taking somatic cell readings directly from individual DHIA samples, Ace revealed.

A last subject touched upon by the Penn State specialist is reproduction. Silent heats are a particular problem today, he said, hinting that deficient energy situations, and anemia may be responsible at least in part.

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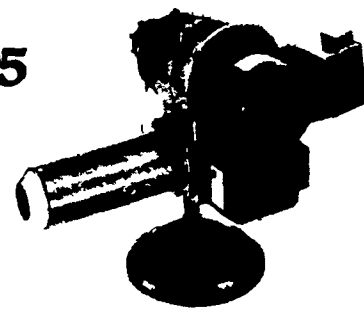
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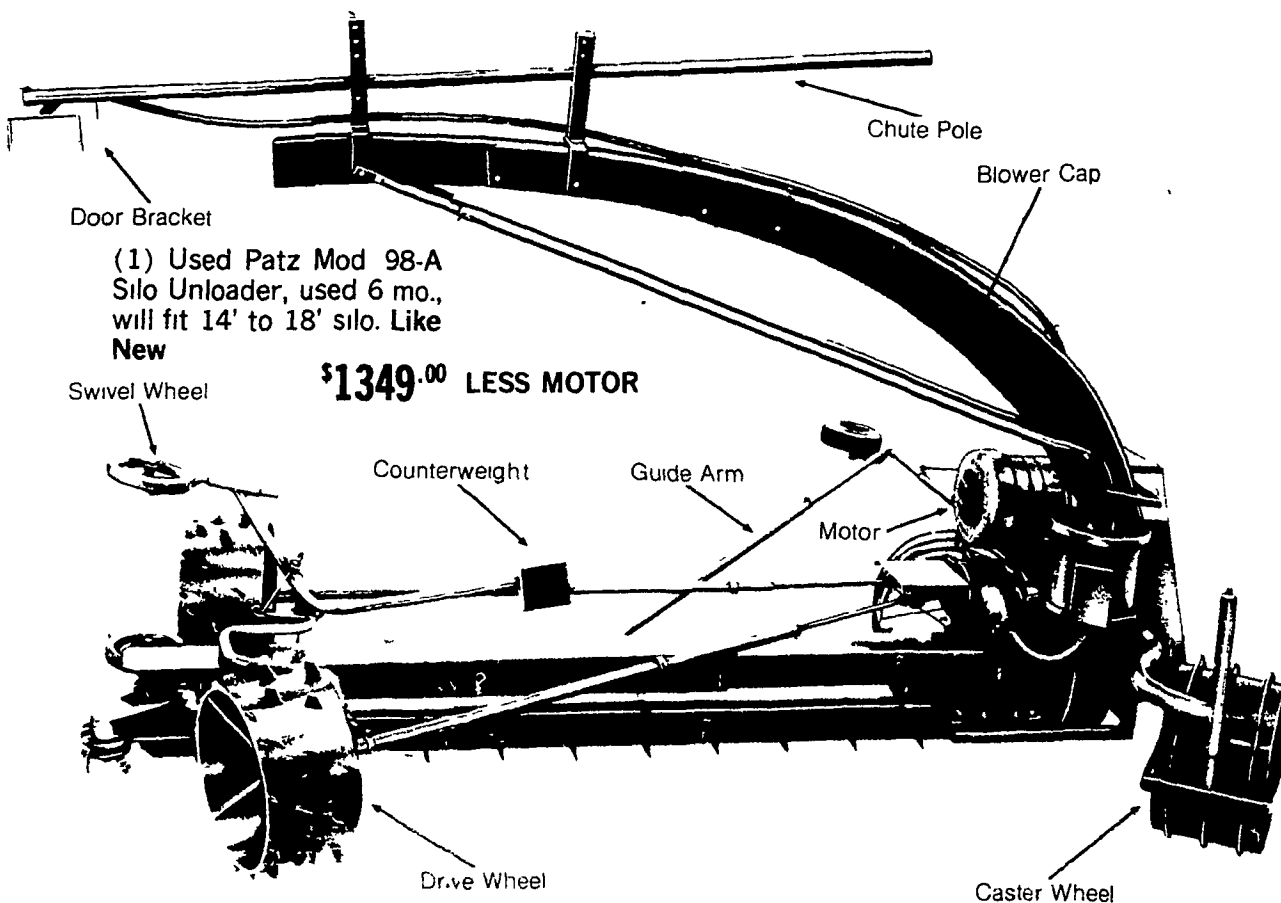


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