



Facts for Dairymen

By Alan Bair
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I have talked with many dairymen this Summer that were concerned about low milk fat test in their dairy herd. There are several things that can affect fat test on dairy farms, but the major influence is nutrition.

Dr. Dick Adams, our Penn State dairy nutritionist, tells us that we certainly don't know all the requirements for maintaining fat test, but it appears "balance" is the key word as it applies to the cows' diet. For instance, while it is often observed that increased grain feeding produces more milk, it may affect rumen function and lower butterfat test.

Balancing a cow's ration can be a trial and error game or it can be done by forage analysis and feed programming. According to our DHIA records, the rations of most high producing herds contain about 18% fiber, with about 50% of the TDN coming from grain and 50% from forage.

Although nutrition is probably the biggest influence on fat test, there are other factors that can cause lowered or erratic fat test: Genetic potential of the cows, improper cooling and agitation, sampling technique and sample care can all influence the fat test.

Like so many other problems on your dairy farm, your fat test level is a product of your overall farm management. To correct a problem, consider all the possible causes.

There is a real flurry of dairy barn construction going on in this part of Pennsylvania this Summer. I and my Extension Service counterparts in other

counties, work closely on barn design and construction details when ask to do so, but most barns are built on the sole advice of the carpenter in charge.

Certainly we don't know all the answers to all the problems, but it is discouraging to me to see the same mistakes made over and over again in barn after barn.

You as a dairyman don't have the opportunity to learn from experience simply because in your lifetime you will not build too many barns. Few building contractors have a feel for how the building is really to function - his main concern is that it looks okay and won't fall down for a few years.

My mental list of dumb mistakes witnessed this Summer include: ridge caps that restrict air movement 100%; side wall panels that won't open and/or won't stay open; roofs that are too flat for good ventilation; miserable concrete work in milking parlors; doors on drive through barns that are too narrow; gate posts that break out before the cows get in the barn; manure pits that are too small and too expensive; thousands of dollars worth of unnecessary equipment; and locking headgates that won't open.

When you have made the decision to invest in new facilities, try to get some professional advice from an unbiased source. Above all, try to visit farms that have incorporated some of the same ideas and equipment that you are considering. It's far better to correct mistakes on paper than to bust up concrete.

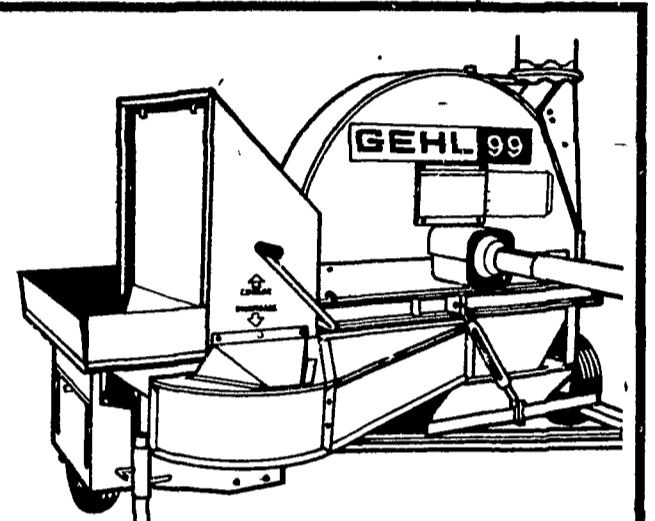
Lancaster Co. DHIA

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OWNER BREED	NO. COWS	% DAYS IN MILK	LBS. MILK	% FAT	LBS. FAT
John E. Kreider					
Faye RH	5-3	286	16,629	4.1	685
Swan RH	7-11	305	16,581	4.0	664
William W. Absher					
Pristin RH	7-1	305	19,886	3.4	683
Sam & Allen Kreider					
222 GrH	4-10	305	16,666	4.1	681
Aaron E. Allgyer					
Sally GrH	5-2	305	17,456	3.9	677
John Omar Stoltzfus					
Sue RH	3-2	305	17,136	4.0	677
Lewis E. Bixler & Son					
Monica RH	4-1	305	17,059	4.0	675
Tritown Farm					
Martha RH	2-4	305	20,488	3.3	674
John J. Landis					
Francis RH	2-6	305	16,268	4.1	673
Luke F. Brubaker					
69 GrH	2-11	305	17,382	3.9	672
Glenn H. Shenk					
81 GrH	4-0	305	19,235	3.5	671
Arlin L. Balmer					
Robin GrH	9-11	305	20,441	3.3	670
Martin Weaver Jr.					
Rosni GrH	3-8	305	18,414	3.6	670
John K. Stoltzfus					
Bea RH	4-1	305	16,971	3.9	670
Clarence W. Shirk					
29 GrH	5-10	238	17,255	3.9	668
Clyde M. Buchen					
Nona 354 RH	2-8	305	17,625	3.8	667
Amos E. King Jr.					
Kate RH	5-5	305	17,828	3.7	664
Joseph Eshleman					
Alma RH	6-1	305	17,588	3.8	663
Jacob S. Dienner					
Admiral RH	2-3	305	16,025	4.1	663
Albert Breneman					
Paula 43 GrH	3-1	286	14,284	4.6	663
Carl E. Brandt					
18 GrH	3-7	305	17,821	3.7	661
Glenn R. Harnish					
33 GrH	4-0	305	17,581	3.8	661
J. Floyd Kreider					
67 RH	3-7	305	18,501	3.6	660

OWNER BREED	NO. COWS	% DAYS IN MILK	LBS. MILK	% FAT	LBS. FAT	
Paul H. Martin						
RH	33	38.2	89.9	57.6	3.6	2.08
Ru Be Mar Farms						
RH	30	26.3	88.6	58.0	3.6	2.08
Benuel S. Stoltzfus						
R&GrH	31	47.3	89.3	54.8	3.6	1.98
Russel L. Kline						
R&GrH	33	30.0	85.7	54.8	3.6	1.98
Karl W. Herr						
Red Polled	30	38.6	90.2	49.7	4.0	1.97
Allen Lee Stoltzfus						
RH	35	33.9	88.7	50.6	3.9	1.96
Furry H. Frey						
RH	33	40.3	95.9	50.8	3.8	1.95
Adam & Jerene Zimmerman						
R&GrH	21	25.9	89.7	56.9	3.4	1.93
Ellis D. Kreider						
R&GrH	28	53.4	88.8	47.0	4.1	1.92
John M. Weaver & Son						
Mix	32	78.7	89.2	48.2	4.0	1.92
Mervin Sauder						
R&GrH	55	36.6	90.1	54.2	3.5	1.91
Jonas E. Zook						
RH	28	30.9	92.9	53.5	3.5	1.89
David K. Stoltzfus						
R&GrH	31	30.7	81.2	52.3	3.6	1.89
Vernon R. Umble & Son						
R&GrH	29	69.4	93.0	49.5	3.8	1.89

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