

# Berks County sponsors annual Dairy Day

## Control dairy rations, advises Adams

BY LAUREL SCHAEFFER  
Staff Correspondent

LEESPORT — "Quality control of a ration should be most active on the farm," stated Richard Adams, extension Dairy Specialist, Penn State University.

Adams was addressing a large audience of dairymen attending Berks County Dairy Day, held December 5 at the County Agricultural Center.

"Someone on the farm should be taking the responsibility of quality control," the speaker continued, "and see that everyone else helps."

Attention should be paid to the nutrient levels of the entire ration, the intake levels, physical aspects of the ration and the entire

feeding program as a whole, the dairymen were told.

"Good ones don't happen on their own, except by luck," Adams remarked.

The amount of flesh on an animal is as important as how much milk is coming out, the speaker told the local dairymen. Attention should be paid to the amount of fill, the feed intake and excretions of the cows because they are indicators to the quality of the rations being fed.

A cow should be bulging on the left side and movement should be seen. A careful watch should be kept on refusals. The manure and urine should also be checked. Something is wrong if manure is too loose or constipated or if forage

particles are present. Urine should be watched for color and cloudiness and ammonia odors.

A good indicator of ration quality is the milk fat test, Adams continued. It shouldn't vary more than three-tenths below or above the breed average.

The level, quality and preparation of forage should be carefully considered in dairy rations, especially since they make up the bulk of a ration. Concentrates only count for 14 per cent of the milk production, the dairymen were told.

Cows should be fed about two pounds of hay equivalent per 100 pounds of body weight, the dairy specialist continued. Dry cows should

have 1.8 pounds of hay equivalent per 100 pounds.

However, remarked Adams, the herd could have an average intake that meets these needs and yet the farmer could be doing a horrible job of feeding. "Larger cows need more. They need the opportunity to eat 25 to 30 per cent more than the other cows," he explained.

Adams remarked that total mix rations are easier to get the job done right. The ration dry matter for extended periods should be 60 per cent for milking cows and 75 to 85 per cent for dry cows.

Forage particle size should be three-eighths to three-quarters inches or longer, suggested the specialist. There is danger if it is too fine. Choppers should have good knives for a consistent

chop. Abnormal fermentation can result if the particle size is uneven or too long.

When considering concentrate feeding, the level, timeliness, balance and preparation are important aspects which need to be considered. Maximum grain intake should not exceed two to two and a half pounds per 100 pounds of body weight, Adams advised. Feeding much more than that will make them go down hill in production, health, and milk composition.

Rations should be balanced chemically and physically. Testing and sampling should be done at least quarterly, Adams remarked. Optional tests for trace minerals etc. was also advised. Testing has to be done frequently, he continued.

"It pays to invest in it," the specialist added.

Preparation is also an important factor. It must be ground and mixed properly for maximum benefit.

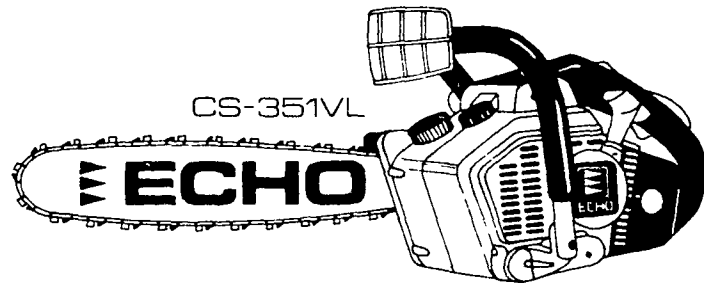
Adams also mentioned the importance of water quality and intake in a dairy ration. The use of water meters was recommended for checking intakes. A cow should be drinking 4.5 to 5 pounds of water for each pound of milk produced.

The water should also be sampled twice a year for pH, nitrates, nitrites, and bacteriological counts, Adams concluded.

Other topics covered during the dairy program included, fly and parasite control; the brucellosis problem - antibiotic residues and other dairy problems; trouble shooting dairy production problems; and nutrition and its affects on reproduction.

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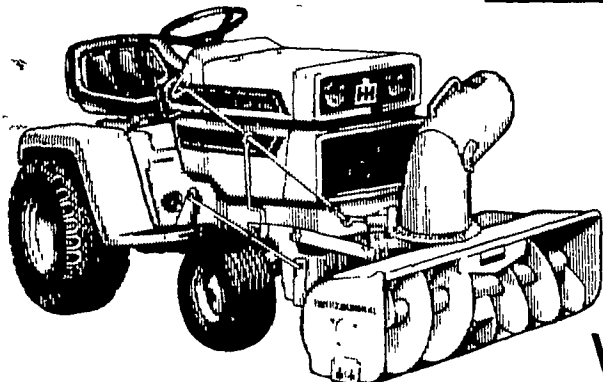
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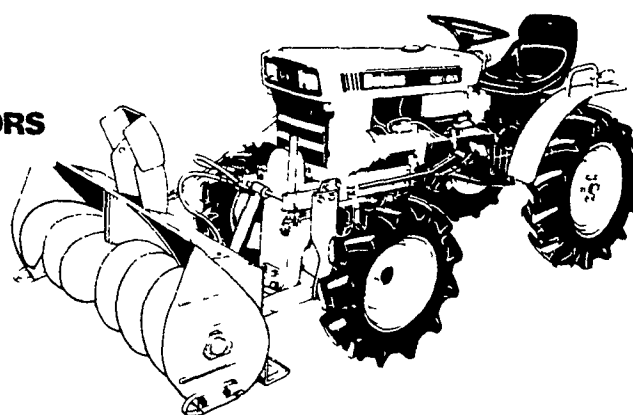
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