

## Dairymen Pipeline

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### Moisture

#### - Friend and Foe?

During this busy planting season, it may be wise to pause briefly and ask yourself the following question: what is your main reason for planting, growing and harvesting crops? How you answer this question, can help give greater purpose and direction to all of

your field work.

As a dairyman, you sell your crops in the form of milk and cattle. You harvest your crops at least twice each day — at each milking! For you, maximum crop yield might best be measured in terms of maximum milk production per acre. And for maximum milk production per acre,

you will need top quality feeds and maximum production of feed nutrients per acre, nutrients which your cattle need and nutrients which they can convert into milk.

To produce top quality feeds, your storages and grains must be harvested at the proper stages of maturity and at the proper moisture content. Let's focus on the importance of moisture content.

The moisture content of feeds is very difficult for most of us to estimate accurately; we can't observe it, and it is constantly changing. Nevertheless, it is very crucial to the quality of feeds and to the accuracy of balancing rations.

In 1979, many farmers were frustrated by inclement weather at harvest time, by corn blights, etc. Consequently, crops were "put up" too mature, too wet or too dry. Nutrient content, in many cases, was reduced and spoilage was higher than normal. These conditions, no doubt, contributed to some of the herd health and production problems experienced by dairymen this past winter.

Herd performance is very dependent upon forage quality, and forage quality is very dependent upon moisture content at time of harvest. The only reliable indicator of moisture is the proper use of a good moisture tester. Notice the emphasis on "proper use" and "good tester".

To a dairyman, a good moisture tester is as essential as most other tools, machinery and equipment on the farm.

You spend vast sums of money and time growing, harvesting and storing feed crops. For what purpose? To let them spoil or deteriorate in storage? I hope not.

The performance of your herd depends heavily upon these feeds. Failure to take all reasonable precautions to help ensure maximum quality in the feeds you "put up" is very short sighted; you have too much at stake. A little money and time spent on using a moisture tester at harvest time is a very small price to pay as insurance for the quality of all the feed you harvest and as insurance for the health and productivity of your herd. In fact, it's really an investment.

Knowing the moisture content at harvest time helps you "put up" silage, haylage and high moisture grains at the right moisture content for optimum fermentation, thus preventing heat damage, spoilage, etc. It helps determine when hay should be baled to prevent leaf shattering, and to prevent spontaneous combustion. It helps in determining how much preservative is needed for the specific moisture content at time of harvest.

True, the moisture readings taken at harvest time can never be considered absolutely accurate, because the moisture content is constantly changing. But, it can be a very good indicator to help guide your harvesting activities. The use of a moisture tester is not a guarantee of success; it only helps you do your job better.

So, now is not too early to

make plans to have a good moisture tester on hand and ready to use at harvest time. You'll find it very useful not only at harvest time, but all during the year as you are "feeding out" those crops.

It is very important to know the moisture to the feeds cows consume, especially high moisture feeds such as silage, haylage and high moisture grains. Otherwise, we cannot determine dry matter intakes, and it is impossible to balance rations accurately. Also, the moisture content of these feeds may change considerably from time to time.

Unless we compensate for these moisture changes, dry matter intake will be off, the ration will be out-of-balance, and herd performances will likely suffer. Thus, the moisture content of these feeds needs to be checked frequently, and necessary adjustments must be made to the ration.

Will moisture be your friend or your foe during this year's harvest season? You can help determine the answer.

The use of a good moisture tester at harvest time, and at feeding time, can help you make moisture work to your advantage.

## Lancaster Co. DHIA

(Continued from Page B7)

Paul B Zimmerman	RH	39.0	83.6	45.8	4.0	1.82
Bennie L Fisher	R&GrH	45.0	95.4	46.2	3.9	1.82
Penn Har Va Farms	R&GrH	101.0	91.5	53.4	3.4	1.82
Nelson W Nolt	RH	59.8	88.5	49.7	3.7	1.82
Richard N Sauder	RH	32.6	88.6	46.1	3.9	1.81
Ben S Stoltzfus	RH	40.0	88.7	44.1	4.1	1.81
Lester M Weaver	R&GrH	80.6	95.0	52.1	3.5	1.81
Paul S Horning	R&GrH	64.0	87.3	50.4	3.6	1.81
R H Rohrer & Sons	R&GrH	234.0	88.7	47.2	3.8	1.81
Lenewood Farm	RH	65.0	87.3	49.3	3.7	1.81
Paul H Martin	RH	41.7	77.2	55.1	3.3	1.80
John E Kreider	RH	46.7	91.5	47.3	3.8	1.80
J Mowery Frey Jr	RH	42.6	74.5	42.6	4.2	1.80
Russel L Kline	R&GrH	35.9	85.7	51.6	3.5	1.80
John F Petersheim	R&GrH	39.4	87.5	49.6	3.6	1.80
Graywood Farms	R&GrH	335.5	91.0	46.1	3.9	1.80
D & S Weaver	R&GrH	49.0	90.6	47.9	3.8	1.80
Ben G Riehl Jr	R&GrH	34.0	94.1	47.1	3.8	1.80
Harold B Good	R&GrH	34.7	93.0	52.0	3.5	1.80
Gerald Martin	RH	50.3	85.8	47.3	3.8	1.79
J Earl Horst	RH	41.8	81.4	47.2	3.8	1.79
Shadytop Farm	RH	40.2	90.0	50.3	3.6	1.79
Robert L Gruber	R&GrH	92.9	89.5	45.4	3.9	1.79
Jonas E Zook	RH	32.5	82.2	46.2	3.9	1.79
Samuel B Lapp	RH	32.0	91.8	47.3	3.8	1.79
Abner K Esh	R&GrH	24.0	86.1	47.8	3.7	1.79
Welsh Vista Farms	RH	69.0	92.6	45.5	3.9	1.79
L M Oberholtzer	R&GrH	49.1	85.5	52.9	3.4	1.79
Wilmer G Kräybill	RH	57.0	90.4	45.1	3.9	1.78
John L Beiler	R&GrH	56.1	92.1	50.8	3.5	1.78
Harry H Ranck Jr	RH	49.2	95.5	48.8	3.6	1.78
Daniel S Esh Jr	RH	37.7	81.7	48.2	3.7	1.78
H Landis Weaver	RH	60.5	90.2	48.8	3.6	1.78
Emanuel S Smoker	RH	58.4	93.9	45.7	3.9	1.78
Rosegale Farm	R&GrH	34.7	93.6	44.8	4.0	1.78

## Daidsburg 4-H club to hold talent show

DOVER — At the April meeting of the Davidsburg 4-H Club, a Blue Form explanation was given by Charla Janney.

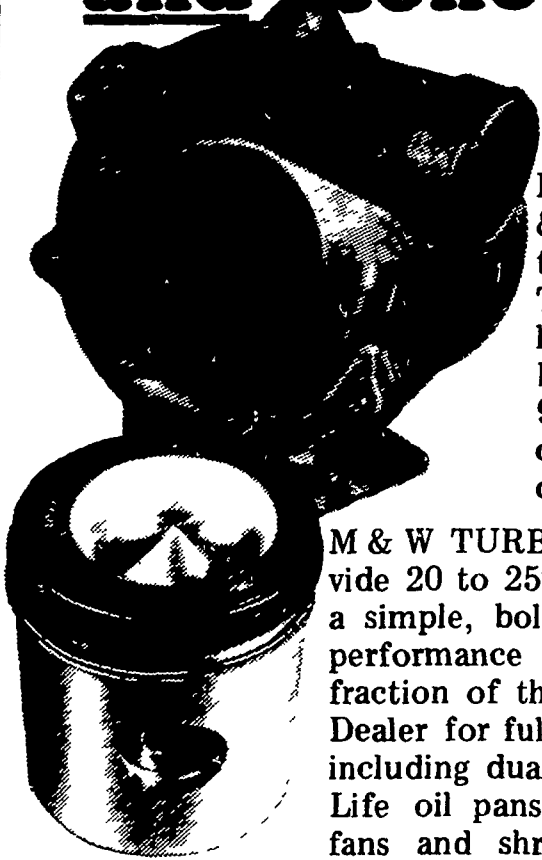
On Saturday, the club will be cleaning up the roads around Davidsburg. May 16 and 17, they will be assisting the Thomasville Club with a petting zoo at the York Hospital Fete. And on May 17, they will be operating an obstacle course for the

Spring Spree at Paradise Elementary School.

On June 17 the club will be serving refreshments at Ashcombe Dairy's Open House. Other dates for members to remember are: County Council, May 7; Leader Training, May 7; County Demonstration Night, May 14; and Blue Forms due date, May 16.

Next meeting, on Thursday, May 15, will include a talent show as a program.

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