



# Dairy Pipeline

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### SUMMER COW CARE

All of us enjoy being comfortable, especially on a hot summer day; so do cows! High producing cows do their best when cool and comfortable. One of the coolest, most comfortable spots on many farms could be a WELL VENTILATED barn. In addition to sheltering cows from the sun, it also protects them from many of those very annoying biting and sucking flies found out of doors. Keeping cows indoors on hot days can offer other advantages, too. It conserves their energy and thus reduces body heat. Coliform mastitis flare-ups can be reduced because there is less opportunity for cows to lie down in muddy loafing areas or wade belly deep in water. There will be less trampling destruction to the pastures; cows can be allowed to graze during the night.

If cows are outside during hot days, be sure they have plenty of shade, preferably in a well-drained, breezy location with water, salt, minerals and other feeds, such as hay, close by. If no shade is available, consider building an artificial shade to provide 30-50 square feet of shade per animal. A narrow shade structure oriented approximately north and south will allow greater opportunity for the rest area to dry out as the sun shifts from east to west.

### GOOD VENTILATION

If cows are kept indoors, good ventilation is essential for good comfort. It will also keep the barn drier and the air cleaner, and thus help prevent mastitis and other diseases. A number of things can be done to improve

ventilation. (1.) Open the doors, windows and sides of stables widely and avoid blocking air flow. (2.) Open the peaks, ridges, and gable ends of barns, or install a large ventilation flue. (3.) Use light-colored, reflective building materials and paints. (4.) Keep plenty of height and slope to ceilings. (5.) Use fans for positive air movement—for replacing stale, warm, moist air with fresh, cooler, drier air; about 500 cfm per cow are recommended for summer. (6.) Fans can also be used to create comforting breezes by blowing lots of fresh air over the cows. These breezes also help to discourage flies.

### NEW FLY CONTROL BREAKTHROUGH

Controlling flies also contributes to cow and human comfort—and to a healthier environment and better relations with the neighbors.

Two new insecticides, Ectiban and Atroban, have recently received special clearance for use as a residual spray in Pennsylvania to control flies in dairy and livestock barns and in poultry houses. Field studies performed by Penn State entomologists have shown these two insecticides to be very effective in providing long lasting control of flies, including those flies which have developed resistance to many other products. Hopefully, these two materials will soon be available.

Half the battle in controlling flies is to start early, before the adult population builds up and before egg laying activity gets into high gear. If you already have a

large adult fly population before you start on a residual spray program, don't expect overnight results. It'll take about two weeks for fly eggs recently laid to hatch out, and most residual spray programs are designed to work only on the adult flies.

Basic to any good fly control program is good sanitation. To help prevent fly breeding activity, remove manure frequently, especially bedded pack manure and other damp manure accumulating along the corners of scrape alleys. Dry manure or liquid manure can not support fly breeding activity, but damp manure can.

Larvacides, when fed to cattle, can help control the development of fly larvae in the manure. But, to be most effective, these materials should be fed to all cattle on the farm, not just the milking herd; otherwise, fly larvae will continue to develop in the untreated manure around the farm.

Dust bags strategically located in parlor exits, feeding areas, shady areas or rest areas can help protect cows from annoying face flies and thus helping prevent pink eye. Baits, livestock sprays, space sprays, insecticide-containing ear tags, etc. can provide additional relief.

### APPETITES AND FAT TEST

Fat tests and good appetites are hard to maintain in summer. When cows are hot, especially high-producing cows, they don't eat well, production drops, and conception rates decline. A cow's body heat increases as she digests coarse, fibrous feeds; thus, cows crave less-fibrous feeds, and then, fat tests decline.

Shade, good ventilation, water, a "cool" ration and palatable feeds are very important. Shade and ventilation were discussed earlier. Water is your cheapest feed, and it "makes" milk! Be sure cows have easy access to plenty of fresh, cool water. Shade, feed, salt and minerals should be nearby.

Appetites can be enticed by keeping cows cool, having good water readily available, keeping all feeds—

grains and silages—fresh and palatable, and by feeding a "cooler" ration. A "cooler" ration is one that contains more grain and the highest quality forages available. It'll be a challenge to feed sufficient fiber to maintain desired fat tests without curtailing production and appetite. Using ration buffers such as sodium bicarbonate and magnesium oxide may help. It may be necessary to choose either a higher test or high production; it may not be possible to obtain both. To keep feeds fresh, it may be necessary to offer smaller portions and feed more frequently, and to mix smaller batches. A variety of feeds and feed ingredients may help entice appetites. Proper balancing of the ration is also essential for good summer performance.

### MASTITIS AND MILKING

Avoid stressing cows prior to milking; don't keep cows standing or long periods of time in a hot, crowded, poorly-ventilated holding area.

Mastitis organisms build up rapidly under warm, moist, summer conditions. Good sanitation, good ventilation, and proper nutrition will help keep flare-ups under control. Pay particular attention to stall beds and rest areas; keep them as clean and dry as possible. Also, be conscientious in drying off cows udders before milking, using individual cow towels to wash and dry the udders, teat dipping, dry cow treating, milking infected cattle last, etc. If coliform mastitis is a problem, keep cows away from wet, filthy areas and consider using a teat dip such as Teat Shield to protect the cattle from coliform infections. If infected quarters are treated, be sure to observe required withholding times. The new, very sensitive antibiotic test for detecting residues in milk makes it doubly important to withhold all treated milk.



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