

## Dairy nutrition tips you may or may not agree with

WILLOW STREET — Robert Patton, Centre County dairy farmer and former Penn State staff

member, who was never shy about differing with his colleagues, had some interesting tips on practical

dairy nutrition at the Fourth Annual Fertrell Conference sponsored by The Natural Development Co., Bain-

bridge, this week

Among feeding recommendations he outlined Tuesday at a conference session at the Willow Valley Motel were.

—Don't ever put urea in your cattle ration

—Don't forget the forage and fiber in the ration. The cow is a ruminant; don't try to turn it into a pig

—Determine dry matter and fiber needs by lumping them together into Hay Equivalent Intake Needs for Hay Equivalent Intake amount to 15 pounds per 100 pounds of cow body weight

Amounts can be increased to 2.5 pounds.

—If you're feeding less than 15 pounds per 100 pounds of weight, you're headed for trouble.

—The best tools of a practical nutritionist are a scale and feed test. Weigh the hay and silage exactly. Don't trust the weight of the hay bale you remember when it was harvested at a higher moisture level. And get a lot of samples for testing

—Get your protein for your cows from two different sources. He recommends brewers' mix and soybeans.

—Forage sampling is only

a guideline at best. It is certainly not the last word in determining the mix of a ration.

—Use 180,000 units of Vitamin A per day for a cow producing 50 pounds of milk. He admits that is high, but claims it is needed for membrane structure and milk secretion.

—Likewise keep the calcium down to about 7 percent of dry matter. For 39 pounds of dry matter, this would be 2.73 pounds of calcium.

—Also, keep the calcium to phosphorus ratio to about 1.5 to 1 or even down to 1.3 to 1. If it must be brought down, just add more phosphorus.

—Selenium is not all that some crack it up to be. It is not a cure-all.

—Sodium bicarbonate, he simply doesn't like it. Again, you're trying to turn a cow into a pig by using it. It's better to even feed some old mulch hay than the bicarb. For 90 percent of cows, there's no reason to use it.

—Get trace elements for cows by growing them; don't buy them. And use organically-bound trace elements that the cow can better utilize

Patton is sold on the advantages of the Fertrell Rumi-Cult for dairy cows. He feeds a quarter pound a day to cows producing 50 pounds of milk; a half pound for 60 to 75 pounds of milk and three-fourths of a pound a day for over 75-pound producers.

—And he doesn't go along with the practice of using a dry cow ration. A cow can be dry six to eight weeks and it takes three of them for the rumen population to change. He claims dairymen are just defeating themselves with a dry cow ration. Changing feed is a stressful thing and it pays to keep stress down at this time.

The three-day conference was held Monday through Wednesday. In addition to discussion on subjects such as the Fertrell liquid natural fertilizer programs, test plots of The Natural Development Co. were visited at Bainbridge.—DA

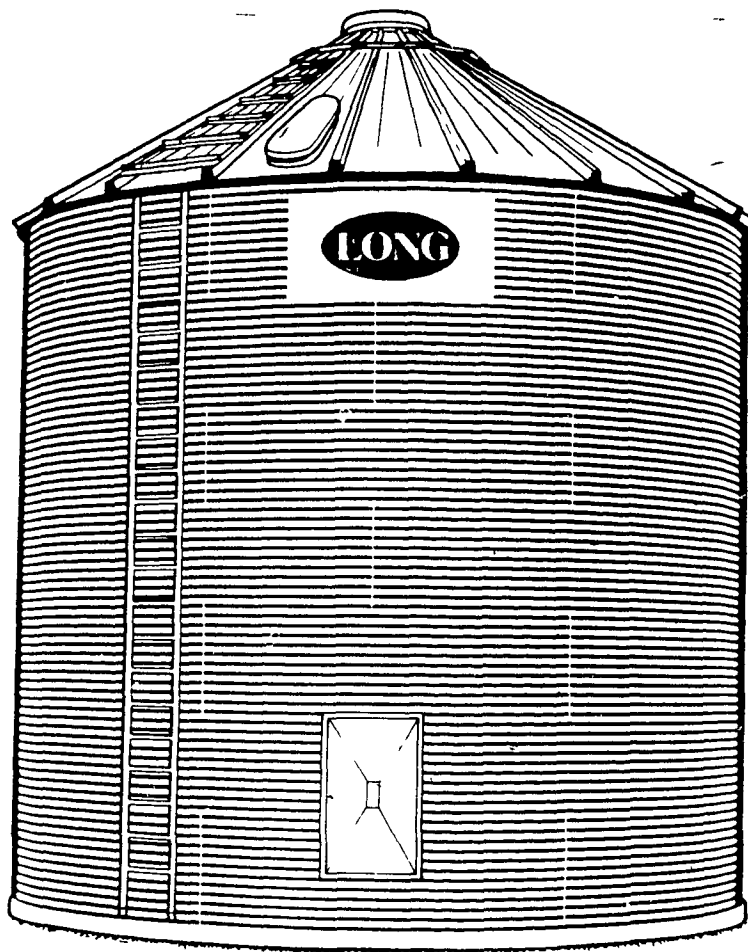
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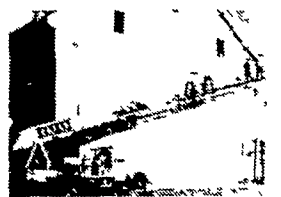
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