

Checking corn protein can help save feed costs

DEKALB, ILL. — Almost half of the corn grain and silage harvested in the United States is used to feed livestock on or near the farm where grown. Certainly, farmers are concerned to some

degree with the protein level of their crops, because it is a measure of the amount of supplemental protein they will need to balance rations for the most efficient feeding of their animals

Both genetic and environmental differences will affect crude protein level of corn grain. Using "average" protein content in ration formulation can be costly because it is easy to either over- or under-estimate. For this reason, feeders should ascertain the protein content of grain before it is fed. Samples representing grain of different hybrids or of different fields should be analyzed separately.

Cultural practices, especially nitrogen fertilizer rate, influence grain protein content. In a University of Nebraska experiment, percent crude protein of corn grain increased from 7 to 8.7 as nitrogen rate increased from zero to 160 pounds per acre. Inadequate fertilization can cut both protein content and yield. Don't skimp on nitrogen fertilizer if corn grain protein is of concern.

Researchers have identified certain hybrids that tend to have higher grain protein content than other hybrids grown under the same conditions. The actual level varies from year to year and location to location, but some hybrids will consistently be higher. It is not unusual to establish differences of up to two percentage points between two popular hybrids.

Is a difference of two percent in grain protein content important to a livestock feeder? It certainly is if he has to buy protein supplement to make up the difference. If 44 percent soybean meal is used as an example, the cost of a pound of protein is calculated by dividing the cost of a ton of meal by 880 (that's the pounds of protein in a ton of 44 percent meal). Thus, \$250 for a ton of meal means each pound of protein costs 28.5 cents.

Two percent of 56 pounds comes to slightly over one pound of protein per bushel. If soybean meal is being purchased solely for

protein content, the higher protein corn is worth 28 cents to 30 cents per bushel more. If 150 bushels of corn per acre are produced, the value of a two point difference in protein content would come to over \$40 per acre!

These values will differ with the price of supplement and yield level. Also, hog and poultry feeders have to be more concerned with amino-acid balance and, in this case, corn protein and soybean protein are not equal.

If grain of two hybrids grown under the same conditions differs

in protein content, a little arithmetic with the costs of corn and protein supplement in the ration will demonstrate the costs of feeding the lower protein hybrids. This cost may or may not be made up by any differences in yield of the two hybrids.

If a low protein hybrid outyields a high one, the simplest way to calculate the value (or cost) of the protein difference may be to figure the pounds of protein each produced per acre and value the difference by multiplying it by the cost of a pound of protein.

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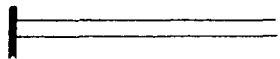


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The Milk Check

**TOM JURCHAK
County Agent**



A CRAWLING START

Indications that the whole milk marketing system has about had it and is running out of gas were evident as the new year got off to a crawling start in January.

The Minnesota-Wisconsin Price Series brought a meager three cent increase over December. Manufacturing grade milk prices were still 33 cents below the support price after four months into the new marketing year. Monthly average butter and cheese prices were the lowest since October and even the butterfat differential dropped for the first time in 16 months.

Nothing was increasing significantly except Commodity Credit Corporation purchases and milk production.

It's not a good time to be scrutinized by administration newcomers intent on budget cutting but last month's performance in the milk market ought to provide some ammunition for the

argument that the dairy business is no bed of roses.

CLOSER TO HOME

You don't have to look any further than the Order 2 uniform price for January to find the result of all these factors striking very close to home.

That three cent increase in the M-W price from \$12.61 in December to \$12.64 in January gave you a Class II price in Order 2 of \$12.67—the same as December.

You did "enjoy" a ten-cent increase in the Class I price because of a jump in the M-W between October and November. However, a 3.6 percent increase in Order 2 production wiped out the Class I price increase. But a 1.2 percent improvement in Class I sales saved you from a drop in the blend price.

You still finished the month with a Class I utilization one percent lower than December, but a blend price increase of a "whopping" two cents from \$13.44 in December to \$13.46 for January milk.



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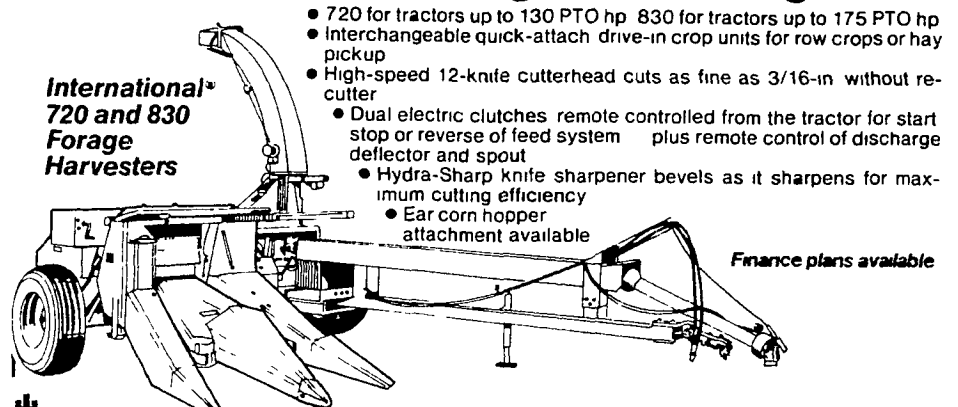
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