

Dairy Pipeline

By
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The present dairy and feed situation is forcing many dairymen to change gears. When feed prices, and other costs are going up, and when milk prices decline, adjustments have to be made.

One place we can start is to look at where we can cut costs. With feed being the largest single item of expense, that's a logical place to start. If this is an area for improvement ask yourself the following question: what is the cheapest feed I can feed the most of - safely? What supplements do I need to purchase to balance the ration when I use this "cheap" feed. If the cost of the added

supplements, or the risks associated with the change, are too great, the change may not be worth considering.

Chances are, the cheapest feed on most farms is home grown forages. Generally, when the milk to grain price ratios narrow, as they are presently, doing - and rapidly, it pays to feed more forage and less grain. True, you might lose some production and have a smaller milk check, but you might have more returns over feed costs, and that's what pays the bills. In addition, as a bonus, you might eventually discover that you have a healthier herd - less vet expenses, less culling, and possibly a

higher fat test. Some cows that had been overfed grain - and we seem to have a lot of them - might actually end up producing more milk because they are healthier. Remember, recovering six points on fat test will offset the two 50-cent milk price deductions.

If you can keep those good cows in your herd longer, that's worth a lot - especially now! It used to take almost two lactations for a cow to break even in her lifetime. Good cows will do it slightly sooner. With the margin of profit shrinking, it may now require three lactations. The important point to remember is, every lactation you can keep a cow beyond her break even point is an extra opportunity for her to return a profit to you.

So, take the time and effort necessary to keep those good cows healthy. It might mean feeding more forages or paying attention to all those little, but important, details such as observing heats, keeping records, preventing mastitis, treating infections, providing good ventilation, vaccinating and deworming, improving sanitation, caring for feet, etc. The list goes on and on.

Look for good buys in feed, consider alternative feeds, and avoid unnecessary frills. But make any changes carefully and slowly, and know what you are doing. Keep the ration properly balanced to keep yourself out of trouble and to help you make most efficient use of the feeds you have or purchase.

Save the best feed for the best producers, and don't waste feed on cattle that aren't worth keeping, or on extra heifers. Keep fewer heifers, and feed them better.

Look at what cows are filling your stalls. It's expensive to feed a low producer, or a cow that will remain dry for a long period of time, especially if you can find a better cow to fill her stall. You not only have the cost of feeding her, you also have the loss of income when you deny a better cow to fill

her stall, and that lost income is probably the larger of the two costs.

When grain was cheap, it was profitable to "push" cows, as long as it didn't result in excessive herd health problems and cow turnover. When the price of gas skyrocketed, it became more efficient not to push the pedal to the floor. The same may be true of cattle now that the price of their fuel is on the increase. Push the pencil carefully to decide what is best for you.

NY Holiday Heifer Sale Dec. 3

ITHACA, NY — Nominations for the Holiday Heifer Sale Dec. 3, co-sponsored by the New York Hereford Association and the New York Polled Hereford Association, are now being accepted.

The sale, which will be at the Livestock Pavilion on the Cornell Campus, Ithaca, will feature registered Polled Herefords and Herefords. It will include heifer calves, open and bred heifers, and a select group of steer calves. Performance requirements have

been established and all heifers consigned that are more than 15 months of age will be guaranteed safe in calf.

Nominations will close Nov. 1 and entry forms may be obtained from Robert Generaux, Rt. 9 County Road 18, Canandaigua, N.Y. 14424 or from Raymond Clark, Box 123, Clinton N.Y. 13323. Working with Generaux and Clark on sale arrangements are Theodore Kriese, Cato, and Montie Soules, Millbrook.



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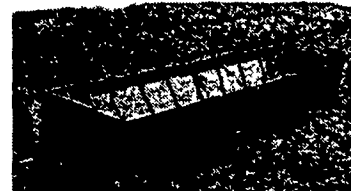


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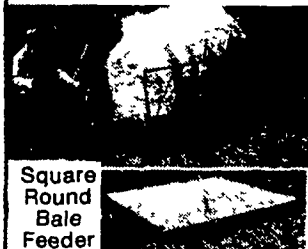


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