

Brockett's Ag Advice

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Hey out there in reader world! Are you still bearing with me even after I have probably stomped all over your toes? If you are then thank you. One thing that may be of small comfort. Many of the

errors in cost cutting that I point out have been ones I have made. After this confession let us proceed with some more ways to improve the cost-return ratio.

Forage testing is a very useful

tool. As with soil tests, I can not figure out how any dairyman can operate without it. Evidently a lot of dairymen are subconsciously tired of milking cows and are doing their best to put themselves out of business. It is too bad that those who don't like cows and the dairy business don't just sell out and make room for those who are serious about succeeding in the business.

Forage testing can tell a farmer what he has. From there a feed program can balance what he has with what the cow needs. But don't stop there - go on and use that forage test for the many additional

functions it can perform.

1. Check on quality - how well did you do last year in producing home raised feed? Can the excuses - I've heard them all.

2. Gives an idea on how and where you can reduce the more expensive feed you are providing your cows.

a. Can you reduce grain feed intake to 1 to 5 or 1 to 6 for cows after 120 days? If so will those lower producing cows need additional protein?

b. Are you over feeding protein to high producers, to low producers, to all cows?

c. Is ear corn plus soybean meal less expensive than buying hay? Could you cut cows from 2.5% of body weight in hay equivalent to 2% if it is?

d. How much milk are you

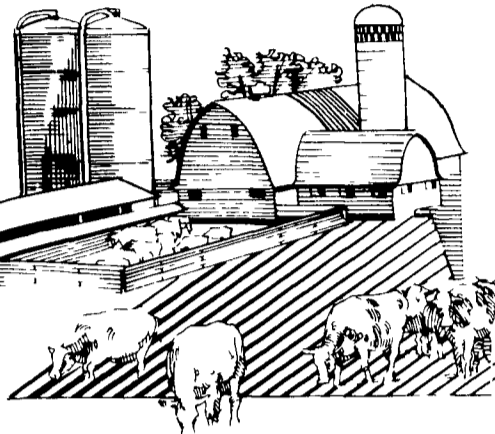
selling per pound of actual grain fed (should be in excess of 2)? Now don't look at your DHIA book to answer this because you really didn't know how much you fed when you told the tester anyway.

3. Tells you if you have room to play: did you know that the quality of your forage can effect the digestibility of the rest of the feed your cows eat? You often wondered why cows seemed to do better on that real good stuff didn't you?

Exotic feed programs are expensive. You may not need that \$1000 per ton miracle ingredient (probably don't in fact). There is nothing that can replace quality forage. You can partially offset low quality forage with a balancing grain feed. Perhaps as a way of

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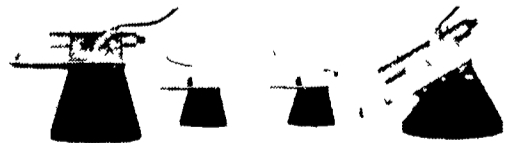
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