

Dairy Pipeline

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Getting Through Summer

Summer can be a challenging and stressful time for cows - and man! If the heat doesn't get you, the humidity will, not to mention all those other problems such as: off feed, mastitis, poor test, flies, poor conception, etc.

Ideally, cows should have shade in summer with feed and water close by. On many farms this requires that cows be stabled during the heat of the day. The problem then becomes keeping the stable cool and dry and the air fresh. This requires moving a lot of air.

Open up the barn. Remove side panels if necessary. Open the ridge along the full length of the roof peak. If you are constructing a new barn, keep the roof and ceiling high. If necessary, use a lot of fans to displace stale air and to create breezes around the cows. And don't forget the feeding area; if you want cows to eat, the feeding area has to be enticing, too.

Radiators

Some farmers are interested in evaporative cooling - sprinkling roofs, misting, pulling air through wet filters, etc. These techniques may reduce temperatures slightly, but they may also increase humidity levels in the stable. Thus, the comfort you gain from lower temperatures may be offset by the discomfort caused by higher humidity. The excess moisture could also increase the incidence of

serious infections such as coliform mastitis.

Another alternative to evaporative cooling might be the use of radiators. Recently, I've heard farmers discuss this concept, but I've had no experience with it in stables - only with cooling engines. Circulate cows' drinking water, or recirculate well water, through radiators, and pull incoming stable air over these same radiators. This may help lower air temperatures while minimizing the problem of excess moisture. However, you will probably have some condensation on the radiators. As I mentioned before, I've had no experience with this, and so I can't make any guarantees. But, if you are in the mood for experimenting, it might be one idea to try. I would be interested in your experiences.

Mastitis

Remember, mastitis organisms, especially the environmental types such as coliforms and streptococci, thrive in warm, moist, filthy conditions. These conditions abound during the warmer months of the year. Thus, we need to step up our guard against these types of infections during these high-risk months.

One of the best practices is to keep the cow's environment clean and dry - no easy task! There is no substitute for this! That means keeping the stall bed and rest areas clean and dry. These are

areas of most intimate contact with cows teat end. Also avoid excessive water to wash udders and be sure the cow's udder and teats are dry before the milker unit is applied.

Keeping the barn well ventilated will help keep it drier. This will tend to reduce the population of bacteria and other microbes in the environment and make your job of preventing mastitis easier.

Then, don't forget to fence off that farm pond and those swampy areas in your pasture. Don't let cows wade in water and tramp through stagnant bodies of water; it's a good way to pick up coliform mastitis. For the same reasons, we want to keep our scrape alleys, feed lots and rest areas clean and dry, too.

Another common time for picking up coliform mastitis is at calving time. This is true for other kinds of mastitis infections, too. You've gone to all the effort and expense of clearing up old infections and dry-treating cows; now, let's not fall short at calving time! Provide a clean, dry maternity area. The best place is a section of well-sodded pasture fenced off specifically for this purpose. During inclement weather, use a clean box stall that is lavishly bedded with long straw.

When it comes to preventing and fighting mastitis, there is no substitute for good sanitation! Teat dipping, individual cow towels, dry treating, machine maintenance, proper milking techniques and good cow care are other important aspects of an effective mastitis prevention and control program, but for them to be most effective, they must be combined with good sanitation.

All this cleanliness and good sanitation, if started early enough, will do a lot to reduce fly problems too, especially if combined with the effective use of fly sprays, baits, etc.

Feeding and Fat Test

It's difficult to keep cows eating and testing well during hot weather. Shade and ventilation will help.

To support high levels of production, cows need to consume a lot of feed. Consuming and

digesting feed, especially forages, is work and it increases a cow's body temperature. Thus, it's no wonder a cow wants to eat less feed, especially forage, on hot days - she wants to keep cool.

This presents two problems. Less feed intake means less milk produced. The other problem is, she is a ruminant, and she needs to maintain minimum forage intake to assure normal rumen function and fat tests; good fat tests depend upon a normal functioning rumen. If this cow was a high producer, chances are, we were feeding her maximum grain and minimum forage. So, if because of the heat, she backs off on her forage intake, we have serious problems. She is no longer meeting her minimum forage needs: rumen activity, fat

tests, and her general performance and well being are quickly affected.

So, on hot days, let's be sure our cows are meeting their minimal forage requirements. If necessary, reduce grain intake to maintain forage intake. And, to reduce the heat of digestion, feed high quality, easily digested forages; this should encourage greater forage intake.

The summer may get hot, but if we can keep our cool and use our heads to concentrate on the important tasks of summer management, we and our cows can make it. It's worth a try!

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USDA invites bids

on grain sales to Africa

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Commodity Credit Corporation recently announced further details of the sale of \$90 million worth of grain to private exporters for resale to African countries hard-hit by severe drought, Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block said today.

The action implements the announcement made by Block on May 18.

Block said the Kansas City, Mo., commodity office of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service has issued an invitation for offers from private exporters, listing the designated countries and the CCC commodities available for purchase.

CCC will make available for sale corn, wheat and rice valued at \$90 million at CCC's acquisition cost. Exporters will acquire the commodities on a competitive bid basis and pay all processing costs plus the cost of transportation to the importing country, Block said.

Bids from exporters must be received in the Kansas City Commodity Office by 4 p.m. EDT, July 13. Successful bidders will be notified by that office by the close

of business July 18.

Designated countries to which exporters may sell the commodities are: Angola, Benin, Botswana, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Lesotho, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Nigeria, Sao Tome, Senegal, Somalia, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Upper Volta, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

To be eligible to receive these commodities, each country must agree that purchases under this program will be in addition to normal commercial purchases and existing food aid commitments. Block said USDA has established procedures to assure this.

Fifty percent of the quantity of commodities sold under this program to exporters will be shipped on U.S. flag vessels if these are available at fair and reasonable rates.

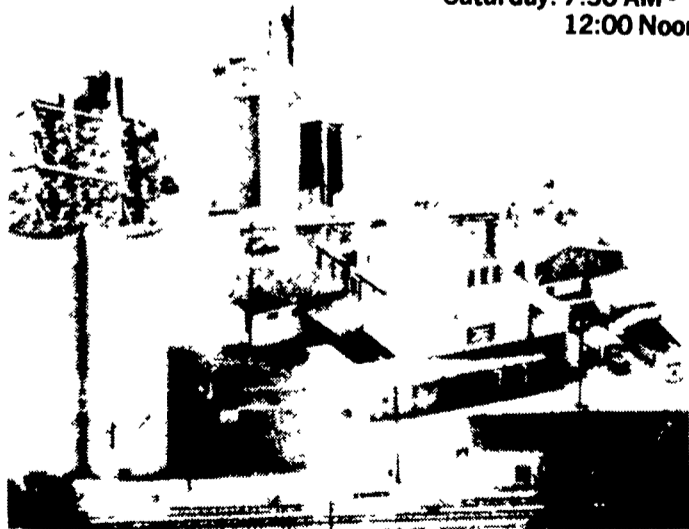
Further information on this program is available from William Randolph (202) 382-9254 or Larry Fuell (202) 382-9241, both of whom work for USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service in Washington.

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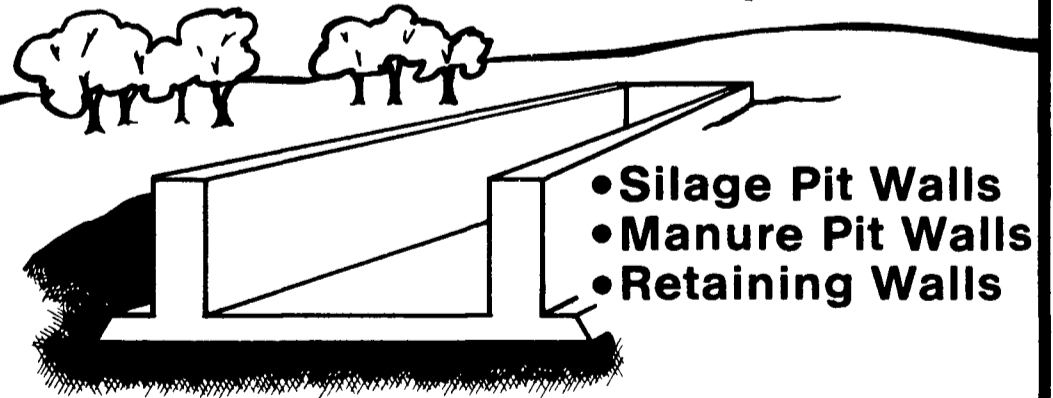


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