

## Reproduction Programs Explained

(Continued from Page A20)

off with the stress of producing. "If you feed them right it shouldn't be a herd problem. This is usually an abused group, given low protein, deficient in minerals and no vitamin supplements." Belschner said the group will often have static ovaries at 120 to 150 days, and "this can be a significant problem."

Another group which doesn't receive proper attention, according to Belschner is the high producing older cow. He said, "Decreased cycling can be prevented with proper nutrition." He stressed drying the cows off properly with a balanced dry cow ration, and feeding adequate protein through the peak.

Pathological problems of reproduction include pyometra, which calls for better sanitation at calving. He urged routine post-

partem exams for cows. Cystic ovaries are another significant problem, which usually increases with production. Early detection and treatment are the key to solving the problem.

Michael O'Connor, extension dairy specialist from Penn State, also spoke about controlled breeding programs and stressed that for it to be successful, both dairymen and the veterinarian must be committed to the program. He added that cows must be cycling normally, and accurate records and heat detection are essential.

Part of the success of the program depends upon the veterinarian's ability to palpate for functional corpus luteum. Also, adherence to a schedule is extremely important. He noted that there are programs which operate on a weekly, monthly or other time schedule.

O'Connor said considerations for using the programs include the cost of extra veterinarian visits, drugs, palpation and extra time involved. Benefits include fewer days open, more efficient heat detection, less semen because of increased conception rates and less culling, along with more frequent exams which makes the whole herd benefit. He concluded, "It is successful herds which benefit the most."

O'Connor also reviewed the use of kits to test progesterone levels in milk. He said, "If levels are low, a cow cannot be pregnant." He told dairymen to take into account such facts as how long the test takes, how difficult it is to read the color changes, the number of samples that can be taken and the cost per sample.

He said kits should be stored in the refrigerator. If milk samplers are cooled, they must be allowed to warm up before testing. Composite samples are preferable over the last strippings, and infected quarters should not be sampled.

## Maryland Meeting To Feature

### New Pasture Management

OAKLAND, Md. — One of the hottest subjects in the Agricultural circle today is the Voisin Pasture Management System. Several farmers in Pennsylvania and other areas have put the system into practice and have had very positive results. With proper management practices, forage from pastures can easily be increased 50 percent.

To better acquaint farmers with the system, along with other alternatives in pasture improvement, the Soil Conservation Service, the District Soil Conservation Supervisors and the Garrett County Extension Service have put together a program of valuable information for improving pastures. Whether you raise sheep, beef, or dairy, this

may help you put more money in your pocket. The program is as follows:

- "Voisin Grazing System" - John D. Minnick - Agronomist, SCS
- "Less Intensive Grazing System - Managing for Quality and Maximum Economic Returns" -

Dr. Les Vough, agronomist, University of Maryland

- "Extending the Grazing Season" - Dr. Morris Decker - Agronomist, University of Maryland

- "The Place of Forages in Cattle Rations" - Dr. Kim Cassel, Animal Nutritionist, University of Maryland

The program will be held twice on Monday, March 23: 10 a.m., Bittering Fire Hall, Bittering, Md.; 7 p.m. - Old Swan Meadow School, Gortner, Md.

### Check Forage Intake For Dairy Cattle

By R.S. Adams

Many of the economic and herd health problems that occur on some dairy farms may stem from lack of forage intake. When forage is lacking for milking animals fat test may be considerably reduced. This may lower the price received for milk by 50 cents per hundred weight or more on some farms. In addition milk production and herd health may be adversely affected. More metabolic and infectious problems may result and infertility may increase.

Lack of forage intake may occur because people feeding the herd do not realize how much material is needed. In other cases forage intake may be depressed due to overfeeding concentrates. Some feeders do not know the maximum levels that should be heeded to keep cows normal. Some nutritional consultants are prone to recommend levels of forage intake that are too low under normal circumstances.

Most cows should eat at least 2 pounds of hay-equivalent or 1.8 pounds of forage dry matter per cwt of bodyweight daily.

For example a 1,300 pound cow needs 26 pounds of hay-equivalent or 23.4 pound of forage dry matter daily. Somewhat lower levels may be tolerated for short periods of time. Concentrate intake should not exceed 2.5 percent of bodyweight daily as dry grain equivalent for most cows. It is important that larger cows have an opportunity to eat 15 to 20 percent more than the average-sized cow in the herd in order to meet their minimum forage needs.

Excessive forage intake also needs to be avoided, especially if it contains under 55 percent TDN on a dry matter basis. Feeding such forage at levels much over 2.25 pounds of hay-equivalent or 2 pounds of dry matter per cwt of bodyweight may reduce digestibility and intake of the entire

ration as well as restrict milk production.

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