Prevention Of Health Problems Focus Of Dairy Meetings

LANCASTER — Hundreds of farmers from Lancaster and several surrounding counties attended Agway's annual winter dairy meetings held this week to gather information on dairy health and nutrition.

Dr. James E. Nocek, Director, Dairy and Livestock, Research and Development, discussed prevention and care of foot problems in dairy herds and the challenge of feeding high producing cows. Dr. Carl Johnson, Research Veterinarian of Pfizer, Inc. explained health management programs for controlling parasites. Dr. Normand St-Pierre, Animal Nutritionist, examined feed additives for the proper selection and utitilzation in diary

herds.

With such problems as recurring mastitis, twisted stomachs, ketosis, milk fever, retained placentas to contend with, foot problems in milking cows may fall low on the priority list for many dairymen. Foot problems may seem unimportant because their effect on milk production may be subtle. Howev-

er, subtle losses can add up, but more importantly, foot problems left untreated can lead to the loss of a valuable producer.

An 80 to 100-pound per day milking cow is not worth much to the dairyman if she cannot make it into the milking parlor or feedbunk. Foot ailments can occur from poor nutrition balance,

stressful environment or be the result of inherited traits, but they can be prevented and corrected.

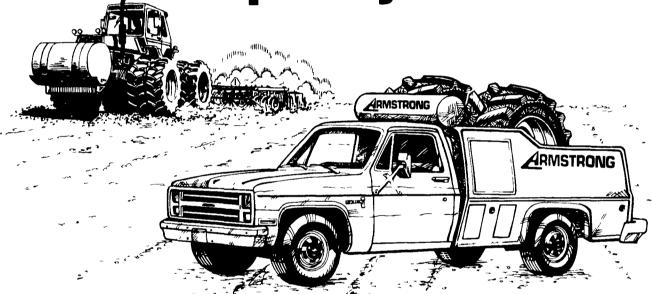
"A high producer is already so stressed for production she must be observed frequently. If she becomes lame during her peak production you won't be able to bring her back up to that production level after the problem has been corrected," explained Nocek. "Foot problems slow down the whole operation and it can be avoided by better management."

High producing cows can be particularly susceptible to a form of lameness which has no visible signs, until the animal begins to limp

"Diets too high in acid from a high grain diet leads to internal disintegration of the connecting tissue in the foot. The breakdown of this tissue and the dilation of the blood

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