

Improve Profit Cutting Reproduction Costs

BY PAT PURCELL

ROTHSVILLE — In today's dairy industry, farmers must be sharp business managers as well as intelligent dairymen. With milk price support cuts more production is not the road to greater profit. Greater profit must come from shaving dollars and cents off costs.

Throughout Pennsylvania many farmers continue to throw away dollars on non-productive animals by allowing calving intervals to stretch beyond 13 and 14 months and also by freshening first calf heifers at 26, 27 and up to 30 months of age. Freshening at 24 months gives farmers the greatest return on their herd replacement program which is one of the most costly programs of their farming operation. Freshening after that steals money from the farmers pockets.

Cutting costs can effectively be done by improving reproduction which was the topic of dairy meeting organized by Hutchison and Trayer Veterinary Associates, held at the Rothsville recently.

Bruce A. Beachnau, D.V.M. and Technical Representative for Upjohn Company, discussed the use and benefits of Lutalyse, which induces heat in cows. Used properly, assuming nutritional needs are met, Lutalyse, which is a natural prostaglandin, can be used to increase breeding efficiency by: keeping the cow herd's calving interval to 12 months; helping to breed heifers at a younger age, enabling the producer to schedule the freshening of one or several heifers and controlling the time

they enter the milking herd.

Correcting reproductive problems can reduce cull rates. Also, conception rates resulting in fewer AI services. On an average herd size of 40 head studied every dollar spent returned five dollars. The labor and time saved by not watching for heat was not included and neither was the savings of a decreased cull rate with fewer replacements being needed. Considering this the savings to the producer could be substantially higher.

Freshening heifers at 24 months is the optimum schedule. According to the latest figures available, each month the animal is not bred costs the producer \$50 to \$80 per month for each non-productive animal. Although many producers claim to observe their animals closely and contend the animals missed heats. However, according to Beachnau, studies show that it was producers failure to catch the animals in heat and that only 10 percent of the animals were non-cycling. But nutrition and pathological disorders must be ruled out

if a prostaglandin, like Lutalyse is to be effective.

Nutrition is top priority for first calf heifers and mature cows. If not fed a properly balanced ration, Mother Nature will shut down the heifers reproductive system prohibiting the animal from becoming pregnant until her own nutritional needs are met. The veterinarian's efforts are in vain if the animals are not getting the proper nutrition. The energy level is critical if the animals is to go into heat.

BLV and Salmonella

Dr. Brian Reed, D.V.M. of Hutchison & Trayer Veterinary Associates, discussed the latest information on the Bovine Leukemia Virus. New concerns about BLV are raising a lot of questions on its relation to the dairy farm operation.

BLV can only be spread by blood from the infected animal, so farmers should be careful when using gougin dehorning methods, removing teats, and using needles without sterilizing them before reuse. It is a cause of cancer in cows, but the disease does not

mean that the animal will develop cancer. Less than one percent of infected animals develop cancer.

The disease will appear in three to four months after infection with a weight loss, enlarged lymph nodes, down cows, weakness in the back end, fevers and in decreased milk production. BLV is more critical to cattle breeders who export to the foreign market. Farms which depend on exports must prevent and control the disease. There is now mandatory testing for exports. Positive testing for BLV eliminates animals from exportation.

It may not be beneficial to every farmer to test. According to statistics, 30-35 percent of the animals in dairy regions are infected. The test is easily done through blood work and not expensive.

If herds are found positive embryo transfers can be used to cleanup the herd. It is most important to disinfect tools and materials after each dehorning, tattooing, removing extra teats. Any procedures must be scrutinized. Farmer should use disposable needles or rinse with sterile water.

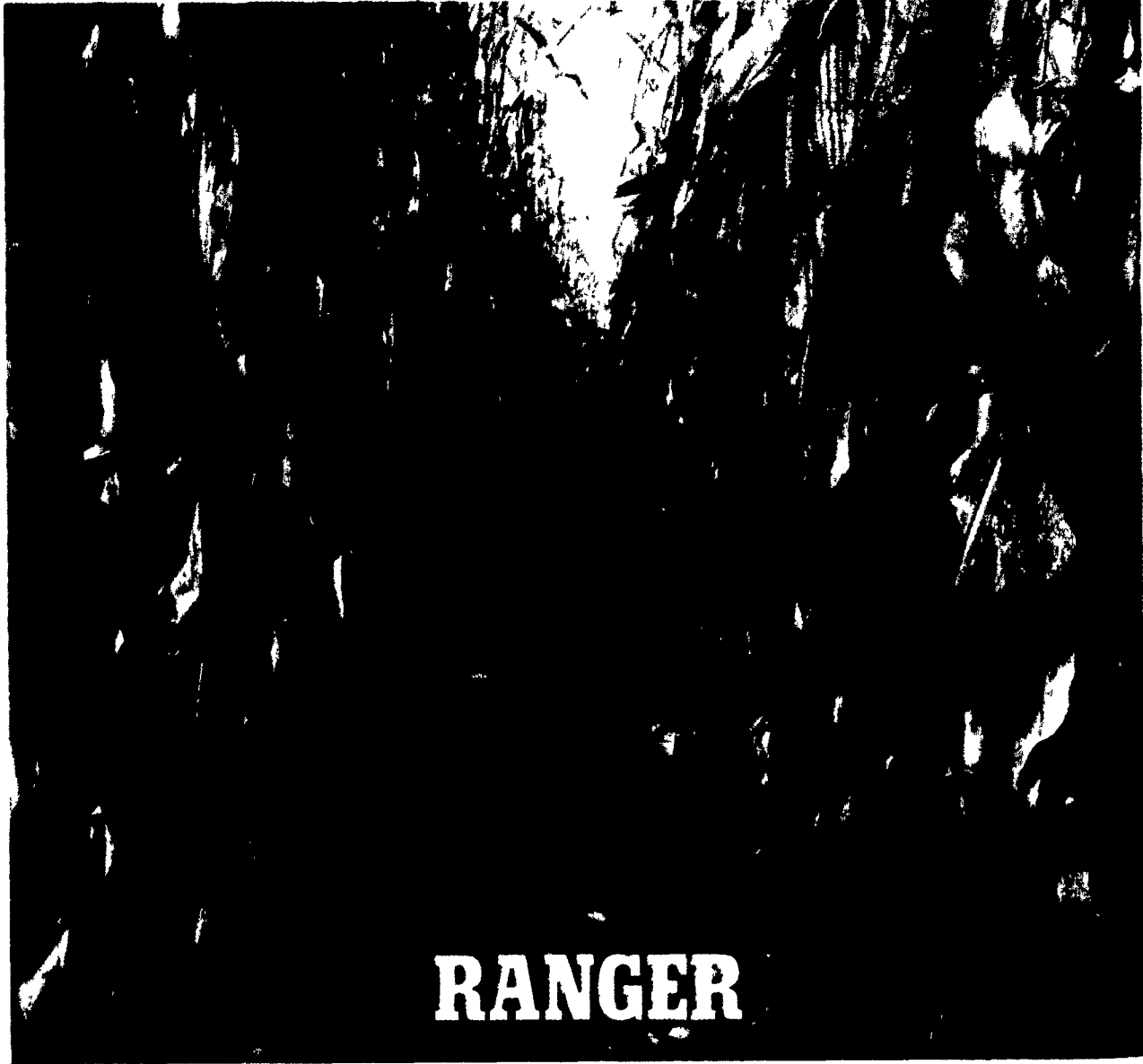
Salmonella has been getting a lot of attention through the media recently and has aroused some unrest among consumers. It is a bacteria that can cause disease in many animals and people. It contaminates and lives the environment, is shed in milk and can be spread to animals and people, according to Reed.

Some of the symptoms of the disease are alarming because there are few. It can hinder the absorption of minerals, cause diarrhea or death in the more advanced stages. It is sometimes confused with Johnes. If caught early it is treatable. To prevent human contamination the milk must be pasteurized.

Using anti-biotics such as tetracyclin in the feed can prevent other animals from contracting the disease, but will not cure the animals already infected.

Dr. Trayer reported that three herds within the area have dairy cattle dying from BLV and this is the highest incidence of BLV he has seen during his practice in the area. Disease increases as the number of animals increase per square foot.

Look at the difference atrazine on



Tops and roots control with no carryover.

Two or more pounds of atrazine for quackgrass can cost your dairy operation two ways. First, labeled rates of atrazine can only suppress quackgrass, not really control it. As a result, quackgrass will often come back within weeks of treatment, and year after year after that.

Second, as little as two pounds of atrazine used in any one of the three "corn" years before alfalfa has an almost 70% chance of causing carryover damage—even if you cut back later. Although the damage may not be obvious to the

eye, this level of atrazine residue can cause an almost one third tonnage loss and a 20% stand reduction (published university data).

Ranger gives you true control with no carryover

Ranger® herbicide is a better answer for quackgrass. Ranger works differently than atrazine. Sprayed pre-plant before corn on emerged quackgrass tops, Ranger moves down through the plant to its roots and kills the entire root

Pennsylvania Junior Holstein Milk And Fat Winners

STATE COLLEGE — Pennsylvania Junior Holstein Members were honored for their participation in the State Milk and Fat Contest. There were 217 entries in this year's contest.

The averages for each age group are as follows:

2 Yr. Old class, 18,361 MP, 662 BF; 3 Yr. Old class, 22,283 MP, 799 BF; 4 Yr. Old class, 22,637 MP, 821 BF; Aged Cow class, 23,013 MP, 844 BF.

Listed are the top five winners for each category, along with their cow's name and actual record.

MILK

1. Stephanie Corbin, Reynoldsville, Jefferson County, Corbinview Linkpin Pollyanna, 2-11, 305d, 28,147m, 3.5%, 920f
2. Susan Troutman, Myerstown, Berks County, Ge-Ma-De Cotton Candy, 2-02, 305d, 22,982m, 3.3%, 759f.
3. Shelby Nolan, Bellefonte, Centre County, Franlo-Alken Roberta, 2-02, 305d, 22,785m, 3.5%, 784f.
4. Terri Packard, Troy, Bradford County, Pack-Herd Jamini Bubba, 2-02, 305d, 22,300m, 3.5%, 786f.
5. William Davis, III, Troy, Bradford County, Mat-Will Tri-Threat Caresse, 2-05, 305d, 21,408m, 3.3%, 709f.

2 Year Olds - Fat

1. Stephanie Corbin, Reynoldsville, Jefferson County, Corbinview Linkpin Pollyanna, 2-11, 305d, 28,147m, 3.5%, 920f.
2. Rebecca Kelly, Tyrone, Blair County, Spring-Lane Very Bubbles, 2-07, 305d, 19,434m, 4.3%, 826f.
3. Justin McMurray, Eighty-Four, Washington County, Never-Rest-M Very Ginseng, 2-07, 305d, 18,147m, 4.5%, 818f.
4. Terry W. Landis, Troy, Somerset County, Te-Ole-Land Willowation Molly, 2-06, 305d, 20,097m, 4.0%, 799f.
5. Terri Packard, Troy, Bradford County, Pack-Herd Jamini Bubba, 2-02, 305d, 22,300m, 3.5%, 786f.

3 Year Olds - Milk

1. Patricia Miller, Nazareth, Northampton County, M-Maplegrove ES Mystical-ET, 3-02, 305d, 34,099m, 3.6%, 1230f.
2. Susan Corbin, Reynoldsville, Jefferson

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