

Dairymen Get Feed And Feeding Tips

LEOLA (Lancaster Co.)—"You don't make money when you feed a cow like a pig," said Dr. Larry Chase, assoc. professor, animal science, Cornell University. Dr. Chase was the speaker at the McCracken's Feed Mill dairyman's seminar. The discussion centered around feed management goals that included: 1. Maximize dry matter intake; 2. maintain adequate fiber and chewing; minimize the "shock" of sudden ration changes to the rumen and 4. feed both the bacteria and the cow.

Since 20 drops of rumen fluid contains 10 to 40 billion bacteria, researchers figure the 30 to 50 gallon capacity of the cow's digestive system may contain 817 trillion bacteria, give or take a few. "You thought you were feeding cows," Chase told his farm audience, "but

you are a micro biologist feeding bacteria.

Chase demonstrated his remarks with an actual rumen that was preserved and coated with fiberglass.

The cows and the bacteria have a reciprocal benefit to each other according to Chase. The bacteria receive housing and heating, garbage removal, adequate nutrition and a natural environment. Since these "bugs" are so well cared for, they in turn provide for the cow, microbial protein, amino acid balance, synthesized B vitamins and fiber digestion.

"How does that bale of hay get to be milk," Chase asked. "The bacteria eat it up in the digestive process. Fifty to 80 percent of the absorbed protein is from the bacteria in the rumen. If we have the microbial protein at top efficiency,

we have lower production costs."

In the process of eating feed and chewing cud, a cow has 40 to 60 thousand jaw movements per day. Chase said if the farmers didn't believe these figures given by researchers, they should go home and count for themselves. This humorous interchange between farmers and professor was made to make the point that a cow needs some ruffage in her feed to have the proper digestion. When the proper balance between ruffage and short feed is achieved, both milk production and butter fat test remains balanced and at higher levels.

Dairy County Agent, Glenn Shirk reminded the dairymen of the county dairy days to be held at the Farm and Home Center on February 26 and March 5. In addition, the heifer housing that was so popular has been scheduled to run again on March 6. More details are available from the Lancaster County extension office.



Dr. Larry Chase used a replica cow rumen to make points about feeds and feeding.

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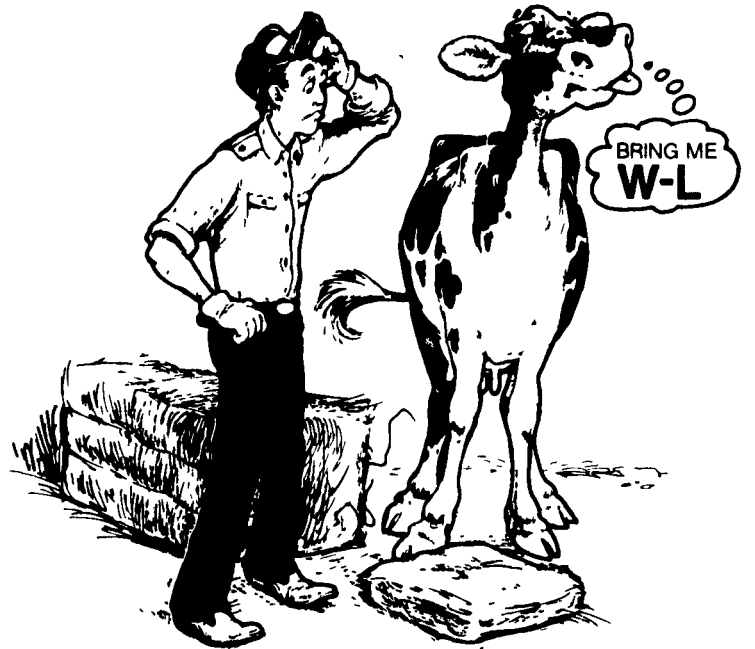
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