

## Dairy Days Feature Breeding, Feeding Of Cows

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**Lancaster Farming Staff**  
**LANCASTER** (Lancaster Co.) — Dairy herd management and breeding were the focus of dairy day activities in Lancaster and Lebanon counties this week.

Glenn Shirk, Lancaster dairy extension agent and Kenneth Winebark, Lebanon County livestock extension agent, held separate but similar dairy days to help dairymen in both counties better manage their dairy herds, especially in light of low milk prices.

A number of professors spoke at the events. Dr. Bruce Beachnau with Upjohn, a manufacturer of farm pharmaceuticals, spoke on breeding heifers and cows and using Lutalyse, a heat-inducing drug.

According to Beachnau, a seven-day system of injecting with Lutalyse and then observing heats can help dairymen cut losses due to missed heats, extended calving intervals and milk flow loss.

According to Beachnau, there are many heifers and some cows that will not display a proper heat. He suggested using a program called the "Monday Morning System."

The system works in that all the heifers are injected with the heat-inducer and observed and bred for the next five days.

Those that don't display by the following Monday are separated and given a second injection, again with the same observation and breeding following.

Of those that again don't display a heat, they are given a third injection, the following Monday.

If there is no response to the third injection, Beachnau said a veterinarian should be consulted to determine the cause.

Both Beachnau and Dr. Paul Chandler, from Dresden, Va., said the ideal calving interval is about 13 months.

Both men also said that it is important to have heifers up to proper weight for the first calf. If not, it could lead to the "second lactation slump," a phenomenon commonly observed when a heifer isn't quite in shape to make a lot of milk following a second freshening.

Chandler said the time to add condition isn't during the dry period, but during the second part of lactation. And to help in success of breeding, it's important to not let the cow get overconditioned — it can cause problems with breeding and during delivery.

Chandler's main talk was to talk about feeding and managing dairy herds in times of low milk prices.

Chandler said that the difference in milk price should make no difference in feeding — it should be well-balanced and designed for the cow no matter what price the milk.

However, whether that means substituting lower cost feeds for higher cost feeds in the ration and the changes made to that, the dairyman should consult his feed dealer or extension agent for guidance in choosing the appropriate amounts.

Chandler added though, that as a result of tests on carcasses of dairy cattle, it can be shown that most cows can stand to lose one score in body condition during the early part of lactation — that time when peak production is being set.

Chandler showed charts that indicated that no matter what level a cow produced, the lactation curves were almost identical and that in order to get more milk, it is important for the cow to make milk during the first part of lactation. He said that the rate of milk production that can occur during early lactation and the peak reached within the first 60 days sets the level for the rest of the 305 days.

He said that feeding to encourage production and also to encour-



The panel at the Lancaster Dairy Days event responds to audience questions on heifer management and feeding and managing dairy herds. From left is Dr. Paul Chandler, Jeff Zechman, Dr. Bruce Beachnau, Dr. Carl Brown and Glenn Shirk, extension agent.

age the cow to use some of her condition off her back during early lactation could help dairymen get more milk and cut overall feeding costs.

He added that a cow should be at least have a body score of 3 in order to lose one score.

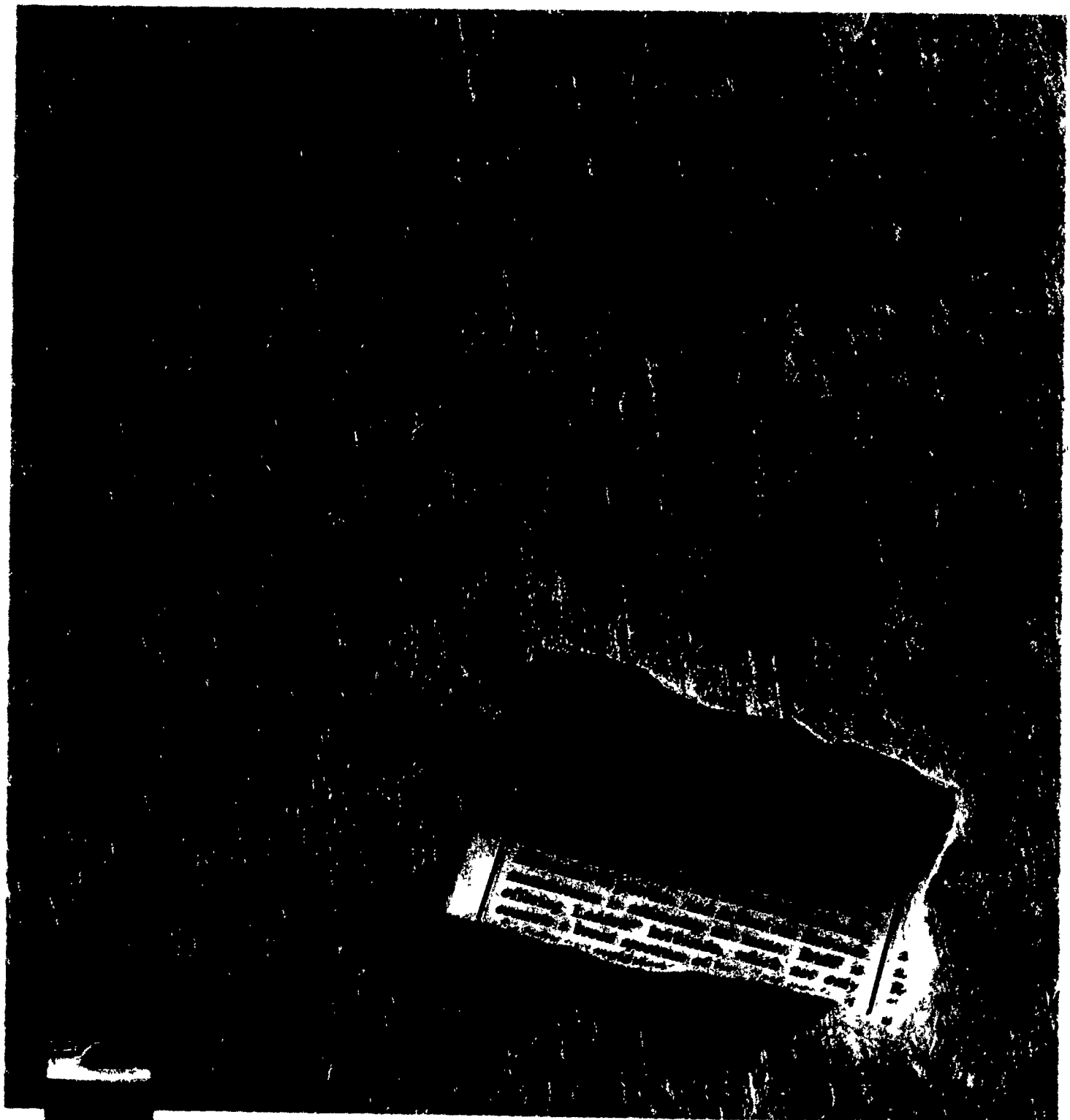
Other speakers included Dr.

Stanley Curtis, with Penn State University, who spoke on good dairy husbandry and animal welfare.

Later Beachnau said that with all speakers, the emphasis has been to care for the cow, with properly designed stalls for cow comfort to proper feeding to keeping in good

conditioning, good water sources and social interaction.

He said that as a start in educating the public as to what animal husbandry is really like, perhaps they should start talking about substituting the word "welfare" instead of other terms used to describe animal culture.



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