

Using Pasture for Cows On a TMR

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Young, actively growing pasture can be used for TMR-fed herds to lower feed costs and improve health or reproduction by increasing intakes of fat-soluble vitamin and hormonal-type compounds as well as getting cows off concrete. Grasses need to be in a vegetative or pre-boot stage, so that the protein, mineral and even energy content will approach that of TMR's used for milking animals. Thus part of the usual TMR intake of dry matter may be replaced with such forage without adversely affecting performance.

The key to successful pasturing with a TMR is to maintain sufficient TMR intake to maintain production, normal milk composition, flesh and health.

Generally, this means that TMR intake must be kept at about 65 to 75 percent of usual while cows are on good pasture.

Large breed cows averaging 75 to 80 pounds or more of milk need to maintain TMR intake at about 75 percent, while those averaging

50 to 60 pounds of milk per day may do well on 65 percent or somewhat less TMR intake. Some herds have done well on as little as 50 to 60 percent of usual TMR intake when cows had access to good amounts of young pasture.

With good pasture management cows may eat sufficient forage to reduce TMR intakes to recommended levels in about two hours or so of grazing daily. Grazing times may be adjusted as needed to attain desired. TMR dry matter intakes or maintain good performance. Often income over feed costs are optimized when conventionally fed cows of the large breeds are fed concentrates at 1:3 ½ to 1:4 ratios when excellent pasture is the sole source of forage.

It appears best to provide cows with some TMR just prior to putting them on pasture, especially in early spring and whenever the legume content of the pasture presents a risk of bloat.

Some TMR also should be available to them soon after they are removed from pasture or while they are on it. This will provide

some readily available energy for rumen microorganisms.

The TMR used with high quality pasture probably should contain 50 to 60 percent concentrate dry matter, depending upon the production level of the group or herd and the quality of the stored forage in the TMR.

Considerable rumen by-pass protein should be included in the TMR to offset the lower levels present in young pasture.

It appears best to not include pasture intake in formulating the

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Pennsylvania DHIA news is presented in FOCUS each week in cooperation with Dixie L. Burris, manager of membership development.

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TMR portion of the ration to avoid a ration density that would allow

some cows to overeat concentrate and certain nutrients.

Average Farm Feed Costs For Handy Reference

To help farmers across the state to have handy reference of commodity input costs in their feeding operations for DHIA record sheets or to develop livestock feed cost data, here's this week's average costs of various ingredients as compiled from regional reports

across the state of Pennsylvania. Remember these are averages so you will need to adjust your figures up or down according to your location and the quality of your crop.

Corn, No. 2y - 2.67 BU. 4.78 CWT.

Wheat, No. 2 - 2.61 BU. 4.36 CWT.

Barley, No. 3 - 1.59 BU. 3.40 CWT.

Oats, No. 2 - 1.31 BU. 4.09 CWT.

Soybeans, No. 1 - 5.54 BU. 9.25

CWT.

New Ear Corn - 67.84 BU. 3.39 CWT.

Alfalfa Hay - 111.25 BU. 5.56 CWT.

Mixed Hay - 96.75 BU. 4.84 CWT.

Timothy Hay - 91.50 BU. 4.58 CWT.



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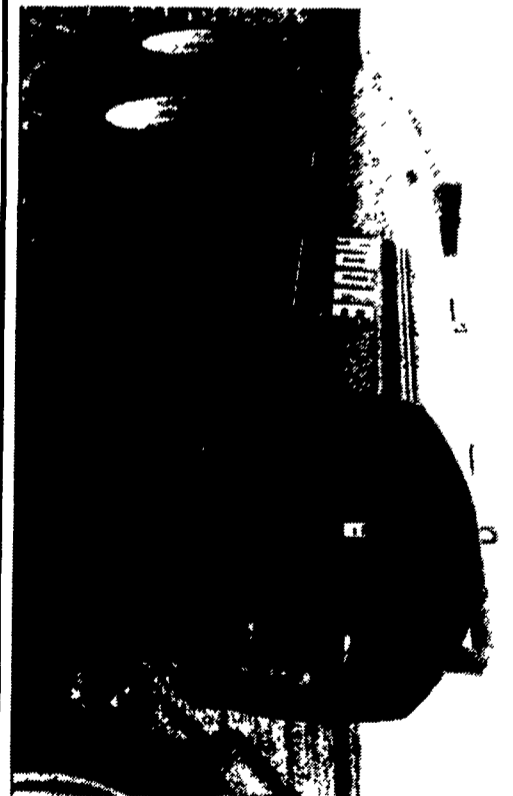
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