

## Beef Briefs

by  
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### ALTERNATIVE FEEDS

A recent national conference on alternative (by-product) feeds for ruminants provided some details on the use of these feeds. This would include corn milling by-products (corn gluten feed and corn gluten meal), brewers and distillers grains, soybeans and soybean products, cottonseeds, animal by-products, and liquid feeds.

There is a tremendous tonnage of these feeds available for use in livestock rations, but there are some specific nutritional and management factors that must be considered.

The upshot of the discussion on feeding value and the economics of alternative feeds was nothing new. That is, with any nontraditional feed source, it is imperative that the feeder know what he is dealing with.

Many alternative feeds are valuable for cattle, but the inherent variation in the feeding value can seriously reduce their economic advantage. For example, one study has shown the variation in distillers' dried grains from a single source was five to six percent for crude protein and five to 13 percent for fat content. Proper diet formulation with that much variation would be an economic and functional disaster without more information. Further, the variation among several sources is even greater.

For Pennsylvania feeders, the NIR van is a local and accurate source of feed analysis. It can be

scheduled in any given area by contacting the local county extension office.

Two emerging sources of alternative feeds are whole cottonseeds and liquid feeds. Whole cottonseeds have been used in cattle diets with more regularity in the past decade because of the greater availability created by the resurgence in the use of cotton for clothing and because of the unique value of the cottonseed as a relatively high source of protein, energy, and fiber in cattle diets.

Research studies have shown whole cottonseed can be effectively fed at 20 to 25 percent of the dry matter of the diet. One caution is that they do not flow well and must be augered into bunks or mixing equipment.

Secondly, gossypol is a phenolic compound found in cottonseeds that is toxic to swine and poultry. The conventional wisdom has it that cattle can detoxify more gossypol than they could consume. However, high-producing dairy cattle on high levels of cottonseed meal (45 percent of the diet) have died from gossypol poisoning.

Keeping dietary cottonseed at less than 25 percent of the diet will reduce the "free" gossypol available in unprocessed cottonseeds and thus eliminate the possible toxicity.

An emerging alternative feed source is in liquid diets. These products have been marketed for many years, primarily as urea-based protein supplements in molasses "lick tanks." This created some problems with economics

because some producers tried to replace poor nutrition with a lick tank. The result was that cattle ate the molasses for its energy value, but still did not have enough energy available to use some of the urea and it was excreted as ammonia.

The cost of supplementing energy to the cattle was unnecessarily high when it came from the molasses. However, recent developments in suspensory techniques with molasses have shown they are an effective method of supplementing grazing calves and lactating cattle with protein and energy. Protein sources in molasses suspensions now can include feather meal, meat and bone meal, and fish meal.

Added fat, minerals and silage supplementation during storage are other potential benefits of these feeds.

#### It is time to:

- Palpate the cow herd and sell the open cows. The feed supply this winter will be too short and too expensive to allow "freeloaders."
- While you are pregnancy checking the herd, give them a fall vaccination series of IBR-PI3, killed BVD, Lepto, and haemophilis.
- Analyze forage to be sure the right amount is being fed, supplements are correct, and the short supply is stretched as far as possible.
- Look for some stalk fields, apple producers who have a

pomace by-product available, or extra fall grazing to help stretch winter feed sources.

- Be careful cattle do not have access to growing corn plants or

sorghum-sudan hybrids that are frosted because of the danger of prussic acid poisoning.

- Make sure tank heaters are working properly.

## Md. Takes Tough Stand Against 'Nesting'

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — Maryland Secretary of Agriculture Wayne A. Cawley, Jr. said he fully supports a tough stand on tobacco "nesting" being taken by the State Tobacco Authority.

The authority has sent warning letters to 196 tobacco growers in Maryland — some of whom, according to buyers, sold nested tobacco at the 1991 tobacco auctions.

"Nesting" in tobacco involves mixing different grades and conditions of leaf in the same basket offered for sale and/or allowing foreign objects to be mixed in with the tobacco. Examples of such foreign objects found this season include rocks, sand, weeds, boards, and hardware scrap.

"Nesting has been against the law for years in Maryland, but this year it has gotten totally out of hand with hundreds of returned sales tickets from packing houses," Cawley said.

"Nesting is cheating, plain and simple. A few extra dollars picked up by a grower who cheats one season could spell the end of the Maryland tobacco market for all growers in future years. I fully support the actions under way by Earl F. Hance, chairman of the State Tobacco Authority, in warning growers who are alleged to have sold nested tobacco," said Cawley.

Accompanying his statement in support of the State Tobacco Authority, Cawley released a copy of the warning notice sent to tobacco sellers.



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## Manure Conference Set

NEWARK, Del. — The Delaware Poultry and Livestock Waste Management Conference will be held Friday, Nov. 15, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Sheraton Inn in Dover, Del.

Sponsored by University of Delaware Cooperative Extension, the conference will interest anyone who is involved in crop, poultry, or livestock production and animal waste management. Research results and emerging technologies to solve waste-utilization problems, odor control, and water quality protection will be discussed.

The \$15 per person registration fee covers lunch and materials. Friday, Nov. 1, is the deadline for registration. For more information and registration forms, contact extension water quality specialist Tom Williams in Newark at (302) 451-2468.

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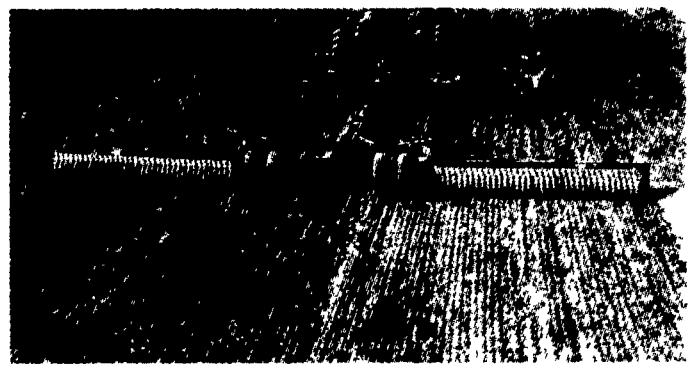
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