

PURINA
MILLS, INC.

Dairy Tips By Dr. Randy Lyle, Ph.D.

Purina Mills Dairy Consultant

Now you can evaluate the damage caused by the long, hot, dry summer. Many of you see decreased forage yields. Some see poorer forage quality. Take a close look at the alfalfa haylage you have.

Historically, the protein quality of alfalfa haylage has not been questioned. Most simply look at crude protein. Some also look at heat damaged protein. Ongoing work at the U.S. Dairy Forage Research Center, in Madison, WI, has shown that cows fed alfalfa haylage diets often give additional milk when protein supplements are fed in excess of protein requirements.

Even though the crude protein value of alfalfa haylage may "test" 20% or greater, it likely does not have this high value in the cow. Wisconsin researchers have shown that the protein of high quality alfalfa haylage is up to 77% non-protein nitrogen (i.e. not amino acid nitrogen). The ensiling process converts much of the true protein into non-protein nitrogen.

Be careful of relying too heavily on the protein in alfalfa haylage to meet the requirements of your high producing cows. It still pays to feed for maximum milk! Your fresh cows must peak, if they are to produce up to their genetic potential.

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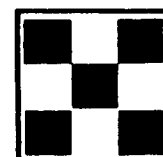
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