



GLENN'S UDDERINGS

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(Article one of a
two-part series)

High producing cows can be very profitable. They can also be very costly, especially if:

- Cow turnover rates are high,
- Replacement costs are high,
- Too many good cows are culled before they produce any offspring, and if
- Too many cows have to be

ranges from 42 cents to \$1.90 per cwt. of milk shipped. This is a very significant cost of producing milk! It is a cost that is seldom discussed, and one that varies a lot from farm to farm.

Note how the costs in the above table are affected by:

- The initial cost of replacements, whether purchased or raised. When determining the cost

taxes, insurance, repairs, rent, labor, fuel, electricity, the value of the calf at birth, etc.

• The average sale value of all the cows that leave the herd. This includes dead cows and cows sold for slaughter and dairy purposes. Subtract this from the initial cost of the replacements to get the net cost that has to be recovered.

• The average turnover or culling rate. This is all the cows that left the herd divided by the average size of the herd. Multiply this by the net cost of replacements to get the average cost of replacements per cow per year.

• The cwt. of milk shipped per cow per year - not per lactation. Divide the replacement cost per cow per year, calculated above, by the cwt. of milk shipped per cow per year to get the cost per cwt. of milk shipped.

Turnover rates by themselves are not as important as why the cows left, which cows left (did you get enough offspring from genetically superior cows before they had to be culled?), how much you got for the cows when they left the herd, and costs incurred by unsuccessfully treating and breeding problem cows before they had to be culled.

If cows are merchandised successfully for a good price, turnover rates of 50% or more can still be very profitable. However, if replacements enter the herd at a cost of \$1200-1600 and leave the herd six months later at a value of only \$300-500, that's dropping a lot of big dollars in a hurry, and it happens far too often!

Cows that have the genetic ability and desire to produce a lot of milk are a challenge to the management skills and determination of today's producers!

Before striving for more pro-

duction, with or without the use of BST, it may be beneficial for producers to ask themselves two questions: Am I doing a good job managing my herd at its present level of production? Can I successfully manage more production? How well producers manage their high producing cows will have a great impact on the figures they can enter into their version of Table 1, and on their cost of producing milk.

Flesh Management

One of the major challenges of managing high producing herds is maintaining cows in good flesh, getting them bred back, and getting them off to a good start in subsequent lactations.

Maximizing dry matter intakes, nutrient intakes, digestibility of the feeds cows consume, and absorption of the right kinds and amounts of feed nutrients into the blood stream will help producers meet these challenges successfully.

As we accept the challenge of managing still higher levels of production in the future, we need to think about how we can effectively monitor how well we are managing cows' energy reserves.

A good indicator of this is the body condition of cows at various stages of their lactation.

Body condition scoring should become a routine practice, and we need to record the scores and get them entered into a system where they can be summarized into useful management reports.

We need to be able to relate successes and problems to rates of flesh loss and to body score levels.

Stage of Lactation	Body Score
Day off time	3.5-3.75
Calving time	3.5-3.75
Early/mid lactation	2.5-3.0
Late lactation	3.5-3.75

This opportunity is available through DHIA-Penna. and Raleigh. Ask your supervisor for more details.

The option is new, and we will be learning together as we take advantage of this new management tool.

What scores should you be striving for? Here are a few ideas to consider and to discuss with your advisors.

What are some other considerations?

On large breed animals, one body condition score is equivalent to about 125 pounds of body weight. The energy in every lb. of flesh lost has the potential to produce about 6-7 pounds of milk, but the protein in this 1 pound of flesh can only support about half this much milk.

Thus, if this flesh is to be used effectively, more protein is needed in the ration. But, the goal should be not to force cows to draw heavily upon this flesh.

The goal should be to hold flesh losses to less than 1 body condition score, for several reasons. Rapid loss of flesh before and after calving can cause fatty livers.

This can suppress cows' immune response, cause "down cows", depress appetites, predispose cows to ketosis, reduce conception rates, etc.

When body condition scores drop to about 2.5, conception rates start dropping rapidly. At 2, conception can be almost zero. At these low scores, you may also notice a depression in fat and protein tests.

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Table 1: Replacement Costs per Cwt. of Milk

Replace Cost	Sale Value	Net Cost	Cull Rate	Cost per Cwt Milk Cow/Yr	Cost /Cwt
1400	500	900	.38	342	1.90
1100	500	600	.38	228	1.27
1100	800	300	.38	114	.63
800	500	300	.38	114	.63
1400	500	900	.25	225	1.25
1100	500	600	.25	150	.83
1100	800	300	.25	75	.42
800	500	300	.25	75	.42

sold at depressed prices.

These costs are illustrated in Table 1. With the wide range of situations illustrated in the table, the net cost of replacements

of raised replacements, be sure to include the obvious cash costs of feed, bedding, vet and breeding plus the heifers' share of non-cash farm costs such as debt payments,

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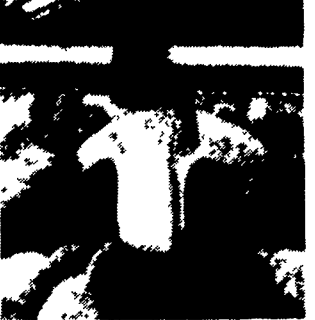
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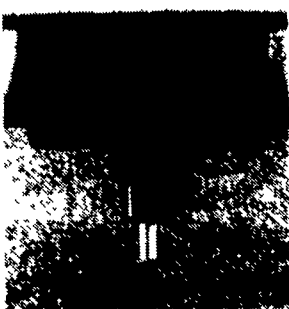
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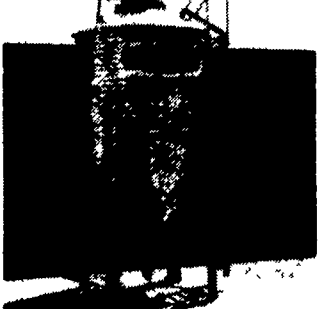
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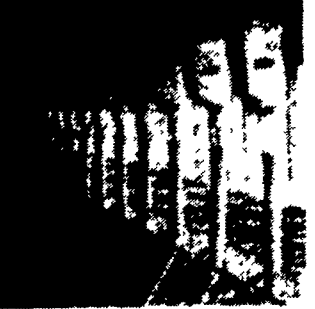
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