

Strategies To Cope With Higher Grain Costs, Limited Availability

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UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.) — The dairy producer will be faced with two main challenges this summer, rising grain costs and limited availability of various cereal grains and commonly fed by-product feeds. Reducing the amount of grain fed to the lactating cow is one option, however other possibilities exist to compensate for the current and impending situation.

To deal with higher grain costs, other feed ingredients could be evaluated based on their current price compared to shelled corn (energy value) and soybean meal (protein value), and based on their entire nutrient content. The latter is critical because even if an ingredient is a great bargain, it may not supply the cows with the nutrient(s) they require based on the current feeding program. Ingredients should be scrutinized for their protein fractions (i.e. soluble protein, undegradable intake protein), energy content, fat level, fiber level, starch level, and even for the major minerals (i.e. calcium, phosphorus).

An IBM spreadsheet program available from Penn State will list break-even prices for some 60

concentrate ingredients. It can work in either Excel or Lotus. This simple program requires only two inputs, the current price per bushel of shelled corn and the price per ton of 48 percent soybean meal. Table 1 lists several break-even prices of concentrate ingredients based on a corn price of \$4.60/bu (Grain Market Summary from PDA, week of April 15) and 48 percent soybean meal price of \$316/ton (Ingredient Market found in Feedstuffs, April 3). An example of how to use this table would be if bakery product is available for \$120/ton, then this could be a viable option for replacing some corn in the ration. If the bakery product was priced over \$181/ton, then it would not be considered a good buy.

The Penn State spreadsheet allows the crude protein and energy values of the various concentrate ingredients to be edited. This allows flexibility for the producer or nutritionist to determine the break-even prices that best represent ingredients available in a particular area. The program is available from Penn State at no charge. Anyone interested in receiving a copy of the program can send a 3.5" disk to "Break-even Costs" c/o Virginia Ishler, 324 Henning Building, University Park, PA 16875

The University of Wisconsin has a similar spreadsheet program called Feed Val 3. This program bases break-even prices on shelled corn (energy value), 44 percent soybean meal (bypass protein value), tallow (fat/oil value), dical (phosphorus value), and limestone (calcium value). This program is sold through AgSquare Software at 1-800-845-1991.

A Penn State publication titled "Sources of Food Processing Wastes, Hay, and Feed Ingredients" is available from local cooperative extension offices and is also found on Penpages (#2890284). This fact sheet lists suppliers based on different categories of feed as well as addresses and phone numbers. This resource

could be helpful in locating some ingredients that may not normally be fed in certain locations (i.e. candy, cereal products).

The current grain situation, now more than ever, requires close

monitoring of ingredient costs and availability. A nutritionist's input into any change is going to be critical. They can make ration adjustments to compensate for many ingredient changes.

Table 1 Break-even prices for some commonly fed concentrate ingredients

Food ingredient	Break-even price, \$/ton	Food ingredient	Break-even price, \$/ton
Bakery product	\$181.26	Corn gluten feed	\$206.31
Barley	\$170.81	Cottonseed, whole	\$221.12
Beet pulp	\$155.23	Distillers grain, light	\$235.68
Blood meal	\$450.68	Oats	\$161.07
Brewers grain, dried	\$195.53	Heat-treated soybean meal	\$300.44
Brewers grain, wet	\$47.48	Soybeans, cooked	\$286.20
Candy product	\$193.17	Soyhulls	\$161.70
Canola	\$256.83	Wheat midds	\$163.99

Applicants Sought For Achievement Award

ALBANY, N.Y. — If you are a farmer and a Farm Bureau member between the ages of 18 and 35, you are eligible to compete in New York Farm Bureau's 1996 Young Farmer Achievement Award competition.

The three finalists win a trip to the NYFB State Convention in Rochester, while the state winner gets a \$500 cash award from Dodge Truck, a 486 computer,

and a trip to the American Farm Bureau Convention in Nashville (January 4-9, 1997) to vie for the national title.

"The Young Farmer Achievement Award is one of the most prestigious honors given to an Empire State farmer or farm couple," said Linda Lamb, NYFB's Young Farmer Program coordinator. "To compete, an application must be postmarked and mailed

no later than May 31, 1996. The judges will look at the overall farm operation, financial farm progress, and leadership in Farm Bureau, the agricultural industry, and the community."

To obtain an application, call Linda Lamb at (518) 431-5633 or Pam Rafferty at (518) 431-5606, or contact your county Farm Bureau young farmer chairman.

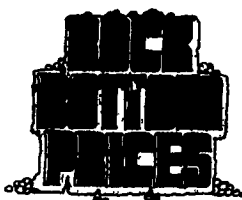
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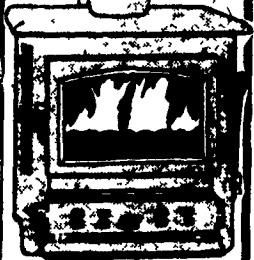
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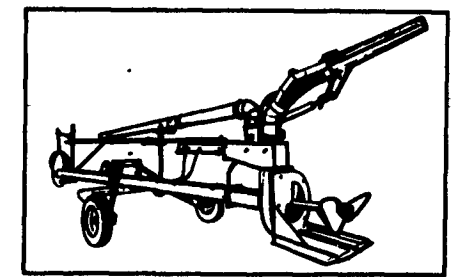
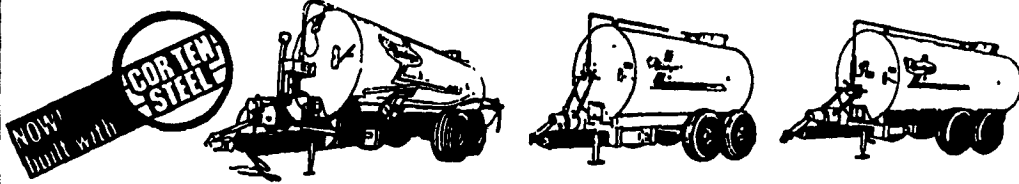
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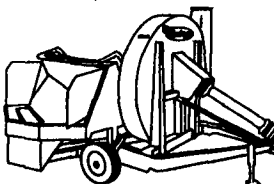
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