

**dhia**

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## Tips For Reproductive Management

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STATE COLLEGE (Centre Co.) — Too often on many farms reproductive management becomes inconsistent and, as a result, conception rate declines and a high percentage of the herd is open an extended period of time. The following are some tips for establishing a systematic approach to reproduction.

1. Institute a sound dry-cow program so that cows to calve in

have proper body condition with minimal problems at calving and during early lactation.

2. Energy status during early lactation is highly correlated with the onset of ovarian function. The more negative the energy balance during the first three weeks of lactation, and the longer duration of severe energy balance, the greater will be the delay to first ovulation.

Develop a feeding program that minimizes weight loss and severe negative energy balance without overfeeding concentrates.

3. Set a goal of 70 days to first

service and make this a major control point for reproductive management. Provided that postpartum problems are kept to a minimum, several well controlled studies have confirmed that conception rate and average daily milk yield were not reduced by earlier breeding.

4. Establish an aggressive and routine heat detection program. Heat detection efficiency prior to first service must be high, to obtain a reasonable average, and a narrow distribution of, days-to-first services among cows. Remember that pregnancy rate is a product of heat detection rate and conception rate. Most progress can be made by improving the accuracy and efficiency of heat detection. Earlier research demonstrated a \$4 return per dollar invested to improve the rate of heat detection from 35 to 55 percent.

5. Programmed breeding may be considered. If it is difficult to dedicate time and labor for routine and effective heat detection, consider instituting a programmed breeding program using defined schedules of hormonal injections. Although heat detection is not eliminated, the onset of heat occurs in a more predictable manner and more cows are in heat simultaneously so labor can be more effectively focused on heat detec-

tion and timely insemination. Timely pregnancy examinations are critical so that cows diagnosed open can be recycled through the program quickly.

6. Set up a team using your veterinarian, nutritionist, AI representative and employees to develop a systematic approach to reproduction.

7. Monitor reproductive performance so that progress towards goals can be monitored, problems can be quickly identified, corrective actions taken, and priorities established.

(This article first appeared in the March 1996 issue of the Penn State Extension Dairy Digest.)

### 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 last 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 — 3.045 bu., 5.45 cwt.

Wheat, No. 2 — 4.02 bu., 6.71 cwt.

Barley, No. 3 — 3.12 bu., 6.68 cwt.

Oats, No. 2 — 2.26 bu., 7.05 cwt.

Soybeans, No. 1 — 7.21 bu., 12.04 cwt.

Ear Corn — 82.12 ton, 4.11 cwt.

Alfalfa Hay — 137.50 ton, 6.875 cwt.

Mixed Hay — 133.75 ton, 6.69 cwt.

Timothy Hay — 122.50 ton, 6.125 cwt.

## Md., Va. Co-op Pays 13th Check

RESTON, Va. — Members of the Maryland and Virginia Milk Producers Cooperative Association Inc. recently received an additional check — on top of 12 monthly checks — for 1996 marketings representing producer shares of profits made on the sale of raw milk by the cooperative's marketing division.

According a news release this week from the cooperative, more than \$4.4 million of "extra funds" were distributed in the co-op's 19th issuance of an annual 13th check.

Producers received an extra 24 cents per hundredweight in their 13th check, paid this February, according to the news release. The payment was made on more than 1.8 billion pounds of milk marketed through the cooperative in 1996.

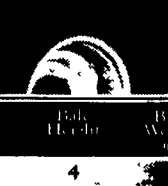
The profit share was paid out Feb. 1. On top of that money was an extra 6 cents per hundredweight of marketing division premiums paid out during August, September, October and November last year, in order to help members offset high feed prices. The cooperative distributed \$1 to members during that time, paying out a 30 cents per cwt. premium, its highest ever.

"Increased sales of Class I milk into the Southeast have been a contributing factor to this year's excellent 13th check," said George Walgrove, general manager of the cooperative. "We are pleased to be able to distribute these earnings to our members immediately. It is always important to us that we get as much money as possible to our producers as quickly as possible."

The milk marketing and processing cooperative is headquartered in Reston, Va., and markets milk for almost 1,200 dairy farmers in Virginia, Maryland, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania.

## NEW JOHN DEERE 446 AND 546 ROUND BALERS

446 JOHN DEERE



Baler Model Number	Bale Width	Bale Height	Bale Weight
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546	5	4	1,000
446	4	5	1,000
546	5	5	1,000
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\*Depending upon crop and moisture content

## High-quality bales from low-priced balers

Thanks to John Deere, you don't have to spend much money to get quality bales. Introducing the 446 and 546 Round Balers, two of seven new round balers from John Deere that are especially suited for the hay acreages and bale-handling needs in this region. The 446 gives you 4-foot-wide by 4-foot-high 750-pound bales, while the 546 makes 5-foot-wide by 4-foot-high 1,000-pound bales.

**Perfect bales every time.** Both of these economical balers feature a simple mechanical monitoring system. Quick glances in the rearview mirror guide the driving pattern by telling you how the bale is forming. Another easy-to-see gauge tells you how bale size is growing, so you'll be ready to eject the bale.

**New pickups pack more hay into the bale.** The standard pickup offers

increased strength over previous models. Or choose the patented new MegaTooth pickup that features extra-strength teeth and three times the pick up power of other pickups. It's ideal for tough or wet crops. A wide pickup is available for the 446 Baler — perfect for scattered windrows.

**Exclusive staggered, diamond-tread belts reduce both leaf loss and bale chafing.** Staggered belts enclose more than 90 percent of the bale, and the tread helps build tight bales that stand firm and tall when others slouch and sag.

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