

Balanced Nutrition Is The Key

A properly formulated dry cow program allows the dairyman to "manage" the nutrient intake of the cow. Pennfield offers "4" Dry Cow Conditioner products with high levels of fortification. On farm feedstuffs should be tested for nutrient content and combined with the proper Pennfield product.



60 DAY DRY COW PROGRAM (COW WORK SCHEDULE)

1. Calf Growth - The majority of calf development take place in the last Sixty (60) Days before the calf is born. Sufficient nutrients must be provided for the cow to maintain her body weight PLUS the nutrients for development of 50-60 lbs. of calf body weight. The cow will deplete her body reserve if necessary during this period in order to provide the necessary nutrients for calf development.

2. Build Milk Secretory Cells - The 60 day period gives the cow time to rebuild the number of milk secretory cells in her udder to produce maximum milk during the upcoming lactation.

3. Restore Nutrient Reserves - After meeting body maintenance needs and calf growth, the cow will use available nutrients to restore her body reserves. Body reserves are used to support peak milk production in the next lactation. The majority of body condition should be put on in the latter part of the previous lactation.

4. Exercise And Muscle Tone - The 60 day period should be a time for cows to get out of the milking barn and off concrete. An exercise lot or pasture will help the cow rebuild muscle tone.

5. Drying Cows Off - A good procedure for drying off cows is to discontinue all grain feeding, offer only poor-quality forage and in those producing less than 22 to 24 pounds of milk per day, stop milking abruptly. It may take up to a week to bring production down to this level. Often it helps if cows can be separated from their milking herdmates. Don't allow them to go through the parlor. Keep them out of the milking barn.

When milking is ceased, dry treat all quarters immediately, and teat dip. If possible, continue teat dipping for up to a week.

6. The Length Of Dry Period is ideally 50 to 69 days. Fewer than 40 days reduces subsequent milk yields; over 70 days results in reduced milk yields or in increases that don't make up for the added days the cow is dry.

The dry period is a good time for trimming feed, worming

and other parasite control, and vaccinations that are safe during pregnancy. Vaccines to promote needed antibodies in the colostrum also can be considered at this time.

7. The Body Condition Score of cows should not change appreciably during the dry period. Ideally, cows should calve with the same body condition score they had a drying off. Therefore, the most important time for body condition scoring is about 150 days into lactation. This is the key time to prepare for how a cow will score at drying off. It's easiest and least risky at this point to adjust the cow's condition, if needed.

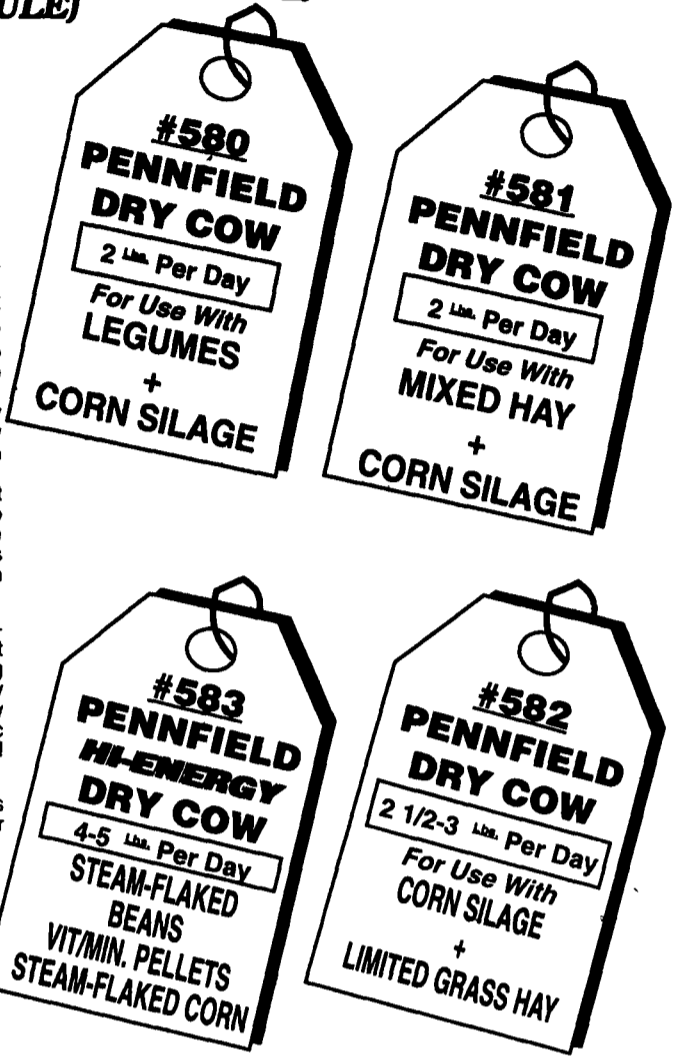
Rather than try to adjust body condition during the dry period, it is better to feed cows so they are in the right condition at drying off. Then hold them there during the dry period. There are several reasons for this. One is that the cow uses her feed more efficiently while making than when dry, so it is easier and less expensive to put weight on a thin cow. The extra grain also may result in more milk in late lactation.

If a cow is thin at drying off, a 2-month dry period usually is not enough time to put on proper condition. Cows typically can gain only one-fourth to one-half unit of body condition score during the dry period.

On the other extreme, if the cow is too fat at drying off, it usually is not possible to take that fat off and back her down to the proper condition during the dry period. Reversing the process by starvation creates potentially disastrous problems with possible fat deposition in the liver and severe ketosis in early lactation.

8. Pre-fresh Needs - Managing dry cows in a two-tier system (far-off dry cows and transition dry cows) best matches increasing pregnancy requirements and declining intake ability. The early dry cow needs high fiber/low energy density, while the close-up cow needs higher energy density with less fiber. A two-group system results in less metabolic disease, improved dry matter intake after calving, and increased peak milk production.

9. Water Needs - Pregnancy increases the cow's water intake by over one-third. Clean, good quality water



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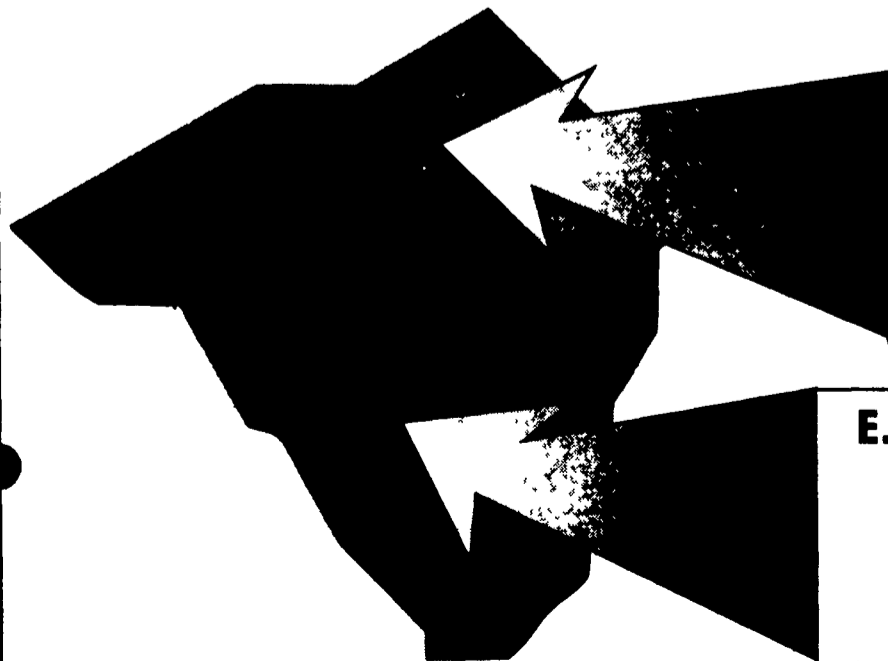
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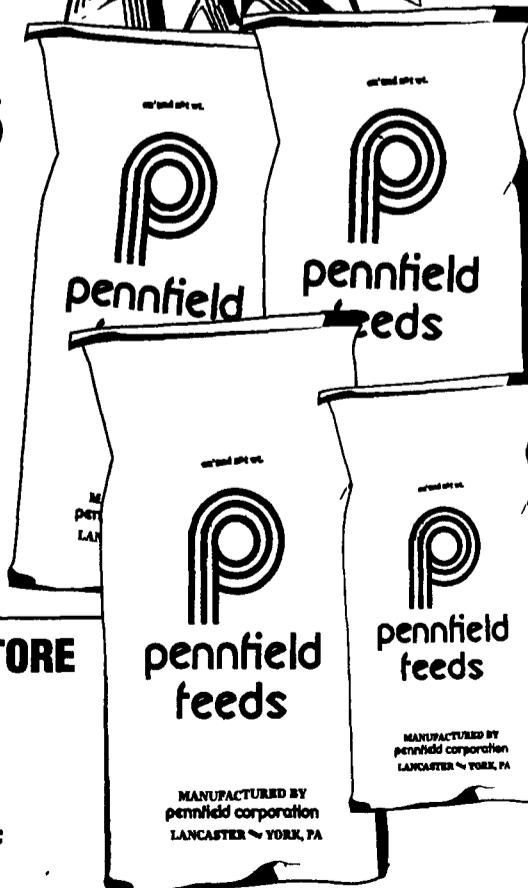
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