

# Franklin County Dairymen Understand Needs Of Grazing Cows

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easily handled. What else do cows need?

In mid-April this year Doug and his father Lester conducted a pasture walk for the county graziers at the Chambersburg farm.

Altogether the Martins care for about 800 acres, including rented ground. The home farm makes up about 100 acres. Of the 800, about 350 is in grass for pasturing.

About 350 cows are on test, according to Doug, who farms with his father Lester and Doug's brother-in-law and partner, Paul Holderman.

Doug spoke to the graziers about the farm's management strategy at an April pasture walk conducted through the Franklin County Graziers.

He said, "Our whole business is in the midst of changes."

During the peak growing season, approximately 50 percent of the herd's diet is from the pasture and 50 percent is from a TMR made up of high moisture corn, minerals, corn silage, and grass/alfalfa silage. The amount of TMR varies depending upon the amount of grass available.

The herd on Pa. DHIA milks 10,818 pounds at 5.1 percent fat and 4 percent protein. Milking is from a double-10 parallel parlor to a 1,500-gallon tank twice a day, at 3 a.m. and 2 p.m.

Martin is a member of the Dairy Farmers of America Co-op.

The breeding program consists of using young sires and some proven sires.

Holderman, Martin's partner, has relocated to a 180-acre farm nearby that will be used to raise about 110 heifers. "Those are some of the changes, and we're excited about that," said Martin.



A Franklin County Graziers coordinator, Titus Martin, center left with sunglasses, addresses the group before the start of the pasture walk on the Martin farm in April.

Of the 100 acres on the home farm, all is in grass, which the cows harvest completely. On the heifer and dry cow farms, about half is chopped at first cutting for winter feed.

Lester Martin indicated that having cows to graze keeps the grass nice and can "cut a lot of expense out of feed size," he said.

The heifer calves are fed a combination of grass silage and minerals. The

grass silage is an alfalfa-grass mixture. The older heifers and dry cows are fed similarly, with a 14 percent protein supplement.

The milking herd is divided into two groups, "high" and "low." The high group is made up of mostly spring freshening cows and the low group has the late summer and fall calves. They are all fed the same TMR "down the

middle" in a bunk dividing the two groups in the barnyard.

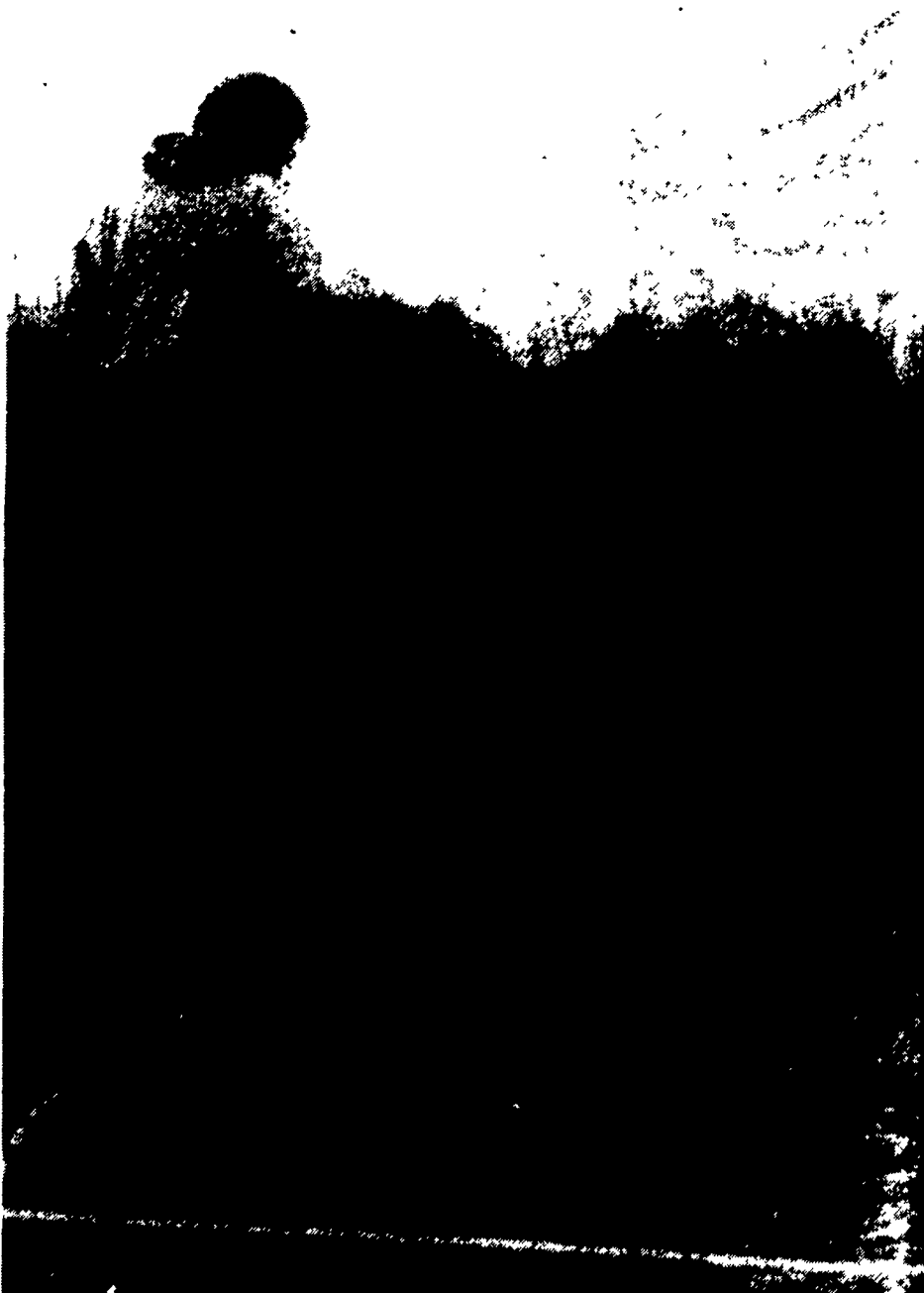
Two weeks prior to calving, the pre-fresh cows are fed a little corn silage and a pre-fresh concentrate along with their grass hay and pasture.

The pastures are a mixture of clover, matua, orchardgrass, and bluegrass in addition to perennial ryegrass.

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This spring, some legumes were seeded — mostly white clover — in the fields. Last year, matua was seeded using a four-wheeler and a broadcast spreader. Doug Martin inspects the matua.



Jeff Wolfe, a Franklin County Grazer member, inspects the water trough at the Martin farm.