



dhia

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QUESTION: We feed a TMR to our herd and the cows in late lactation show sudden drops in MUN. Does this mean that we should feed more soybean meal to these cows?

ANSWER: Feeding more soybean to your cows will have a pretty good chance of raising MUN, but we need to answer more questions about your feeding management to see if this is your best solution.

It was found that this herd groups by open and pregnant cows. This alone is a pretty good way of grouping for reproductive management, because heat detection can be concentrated in part of the herd instead of all.

There are problems that arise when we try to feed these cows. Looking at the DHIA records, we find that some cows settle in early lactation and others not so early. Why is this a problem?

The early settling cows enter the pregnant group as early as 85 days in milk, with the voluntary waiting period being 55 days, and vet rectal palpation at 30 days post breeding.

We see cows in this group just getting to peak dry matter intake, and cows at reduced intake, as they near their dry period. Vast differences occur between these cows when we look at their nutrient requirements.

The open group of cows has an average MUN of 12.7 and a range of 10.3 to 16.6.

There is also considerable spread in days-in-milk — of 10 to 274.

They are fed a TMR twice daily. The pregnant group of cows are also fed a TMR twice daily, but not the same formulation as the open group.

Comparing average production of both groups, we see that the first

group averages 92 pounds and the second 67 pounds.

The drop in production from one group to the other is probably too large and is initiated by the fact that the feeding management is telling those cows to produce less milk by feeding a TMR that drastically reduces grain fed, particularly the protein fraction.

When the cows become pregnant, and are fed this diet, their average MUN falls to 8.6 and ranges from 6 to 13.3.

MUN when used as a diagnostic tool, can help us fine tune our diets by allowing the cows to tell us what some of their needs are.

In this particular case, if care was exercised in reducing grain and protein levels as cows were moved from one group to the other, production could be better maintained at a level closer to the first group average.

Dairyman To Dairyman

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Dairyman to Dairyman is a regular column by George Cudoc, consulting dairyman for PA DHIA. Contact him by calling the PA DHIA Service Center at (800) 344-8378, or him directly at (724) 625-8971; fax (724) 625-8972; e-mail: GCudoc@fyi.net

Grouping cows is a management decision all dairymen have to make.

We can use this case as an example of utilizing a tool like MUN to help us cope with the decision.

Some would criticize and point the finger at the grouping decision as being a wrong one. I disagree and would defend such a decision as one that is custom-fitted to the management style on the farm.

Next, I would encourage changes to that grouping management in small steps to monitor negative effects brought about by treating the groups differently.

More specifically, if you think you must change the diet of the second group, do it by less abrupt changes than will cause production to fall and MUN to go down.

I must say, in conclusion, that I have become a supporter of single ration TMRs over the past years due to problems like the one discussed.

Cows don't always know what they need, but they usually do eat more if they are hungry and healthy, and eat less when they don't need it.

This style of feeding also contributes to higher persistency of production which spells higher profits.

MUN can tell us if an how much to alter diets. Use this tool to read the needs of the cow and then to manage to her needs.

Grouping is a management strategy fit to this farm and MUN is an evaluation of how to use this

strategy.

Keeping all cows within the 10 to 14 range of MUN tells us that at least they are utilizing protein provided in the most efficient way. That is certainly a better start than what we had in the past.

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 — 2.29 bu., 4.10 cwt.
- Wheat, No. 2 — 2.25 bu., 3.76 cwt.
- Barley, No. 3 — 1.33 bu., 2.85 cwt.
- Oats, No. 2 — 1.26 bu., 3.81 cwt.
- Soybeans, No. 1 — 4.92 bu., 8.22 cwt.
- Ear Corn — 81.24 ton, 4.06 cwt.
- Alfalfa Hay — 101.50 ton, 5.08 cwt.
- Mixed Hay — 113.50 ton, 5.68 cwt.
- Timothy Hay — 108.75 ton, 5.44 cwt.



In showmanship, Jessica Schmidt, right, is the grand champion and April Leaman is the reserve at the Solanco Sheep Show.



Judge Ron Miller selects Allison Hughes' spotted lamb, right, as the grand champion market lamb and Tiffany Dean's heavyweight as the reserve grand champion at Solanco Fair.

Best Friends Clinch Solanco Market Lamb Championships

LOU ANN GOOD
Lancaster Farming Staff
QUARRYVILLE (Lancaster Co.) — Best friends swept the grand and reserve championships at the Solanco Sheep Show on Wednesday.

This wasn't the first year Allison Hughes and Tiffany Dean caused the judge some contemplation in the show ring.

"These are the two best lambs I've seen today," said Ron Miller, who judged the event. He praised the lambs for muscling, hind quarters, and length of loin.

In the end, it was Allison's spotted crossbred lamb that won the

grand championship and Tiffany's lamb from Tim Fleener that took the reserve trophy. Both 125-pound lambs had been the champion and reserve in the heavyweight class respectively.

The 12-year-old friends said that they agree on almost everything except one—feeding. Tiffany feeds her lambs Purina Show Chow and Allison feeds hers a grain mixture devised by a family friend.

If it's in the feed, the mixtures must be comparable because both have about the same number of championships and reserves accumulated in recent years. In fact,

Tiffany, later in the show, went on to win champion pair of market lamb.

Allison is the daughter of Chet and Marie Hughes of Lancaster and Tiffany is the daughter of Gary and Joan Dean of Strasburg.

The final showdown also included the lightweight champion shown by April Leaman and the reserve lightweight by Jill Kreider. Middleweight champion was shown by Brent Landis and reserve by Allison Hughes. Brother and sister Brad and April Leaman swept the light heavyweight competition with almost identical lambs. Brad also too the reserve

grand champion title for market lamb pairs.

Champion in showmanship was Jessica Schmidt of Drumore. The 16-year-old is the daughter of Pete and Laurie Schmidt. Reserve in showmanship was April Leaman, 15, and daughter of David and Jackie Leaman of Willow Street.

A partial listing of show results follows:

SOLANCO SHEEP

SHOWMANSHIP

- SENIORS 1 Jessica Schmidt, 2 Jimmy Mullen, 3 Jeremy Railing,
- INTERMEDIATE 1 April Leaman, 2 Elizabeth Young, Ryan Nelson
- JUNIOR 1 Debra Young, 2 Allison Hughes, 3 Tiffany Dean
- NOVICE. 1 Dustin Collins, 2 Katrina Frey, 3

Amber Funk
CHAMPION SHOWMANSHIP Jessica Schmidt
RESERVE SHOWMANSHIP April Leaman

LIGHTWEIGHT MARKET LAMBS

- CLASS 1 1 Brian Mull 2 Maureen Madden, 3 Jimmy Mullen
- CLASS 2 1 April Leaman, 2 Jill Kreider 3 Jimmy Mullen
- CLASS 3 1 Jessica Schmidt, 2 Lisa Hershey 3 Lisa Hershey,
- CHAMPION LIGHT WEIGHT April Leaman
RESERVE CH LIGHTWEIGHT, Jill Kreider

MIDDLEWEIGHT MARKET LAMBS

- CLASS 4 1 Allison Huges, 2 Brian Mull, 3 Debra Young
- CLASS 5 1 John Schmidt, 2 Loren Hershey, 3 Amanda Overly
- CLASS 6 1 Brent Landis, 2 John Schmidt, 3 Ruth Frey
- CHAMPION MIDDLEWEIGHT Brent Landis
RESERVE CH MIDDLEWEIGHT Allison Hughes

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