

**DAIRY FARM
MANAGEMENT
BASICS**

A Farm Management Course by
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Archived at Internet Home Page www.lancasterfarming.com

Rest Areas - Article 21

The goal is to encourage cows to spend a lot of time lying down in a clean area where they can rest and chew their cud. It has been said that cows should be doing one of three things, all of which are related to the production and harvesting of milk.

- Standing to eat, consuming feed to convert to milk
- Standing to be milked.
- Lying down so they can - -
 - Conserve energy and use more of it for milk production.
 - Chew their cuds and make more milk.
 - Send more blood and nutrients to the udder to make milk

Make rest areas comfortable, healthy and enticing for cows to use so they lie down and chew their cuds

- Options include:
- Well-sodded areas.
 - Well-bedded pens.
 - Properly designed stalls with soft beds, covered with some bedding

Provide cows with clean, dry, comfortable stalls and pens

Cow mattresses and soft rubber mats provide comfort to cows, but the cows should still be bedded for the reasons discussed below. The hard rubber mats and rubber belting materials generally are not satisfactory.

A thick layer of bedding on stall beds works just as well as mats and mattresses, without the cost of purchasing them nor the cost of maintaining and replacing them in the future. A bedding retainer bar at the rear of the stall can help hold the bedding in the stall. However, bedding cost is a factor, but the cost of bedding should be weighed against its benefits, which is discussed below.

Bedding is beneficial because it absorbs moisture, it helps to protect the teat end from exposure to large numbers of mastitis-causing organisms, it provides more cushion for the hocks and reduces hock injuries, and it offers cows more traction so they struggle less and trample fewer teats when getting up.

The design of the stall is critical, and when you are remodeling or building, be sure to get the dimensions right the first time. Recommended design specs can be obtained from many universities, builders, engineers and other consultants. Stalls should encourage usage, not discourage usage. Cows should enter the stall, lie down and get up without hesitation and without fear of experiencing discomfort or injury.

In tie stalls, the position of tie rails and cow trainers, the length of tie chains and the position of water bowls affect how cows lie down and get up, how well they can reach the manger, and how well they can reach and operate the water bowls. Attempt to train heifers to the use of stalls before they calve.

When cows are lying down in freestalls, they need to have enough lunge room to thrust their head forward or sideways, in a low position, in order to get up easily without being obstructed by partitions, poorly positioned dividers, etc. Brisket boards help make sure cows lie in the proper position so they can get up easily. Neck rails and stall dividers help position the cow properly when she is standing so she ends up in the right position when she lies down. Proper height of the top rail of the stall divider can discourage cows from turning around in their stalls. Once the cow is lying down the stall divider serves no purpose, and it is more comfortable if cows don't have a divider poking them in their ribs, hips and legs; that makes loop dividers advantageous. For specific designs, seek expert advice.

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WAYNESBORO, PA CHOPPED: 9/1/98
FRANKLIN COUNTY

Brand	Hybrid	70% Moist	Harvest DM	Digestibility IVDC	Adj NE-L	Adj Milk/A
PIONEER	3335	25.63	49.63	72.52	.72	17865.20
PIONEER	32K61	28.00	53.07	67.54	.62	14080.19
PIONEER	33Y18	26.12	53.78	72.82	.72	17684.02
PIONEER	33G26	25.54	50.80	72.00	.72	18015.82
PIONEER	33Y09 (Bt)	25.50	46.17	77.05	.81	22332.22
FLD CHC	9114	25.06	45.84	71.13	.69	15827.81
MYCOGENT	TMF113	25.82	48.88	72.01	.70	17939.69

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MILLERSTOWN, PA CHOPPED: 9/14/98
PERRY COUNTY

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CARGILL	7301FQ	15.09	35.72	69.06	.67	8797.39
PIONEER	33Y18	18.75	38.85	64.21	.56	6435.27
PIONEER	33V08 (Bt)	18.72	39.53	71.69	.71	12554.28
CARGILL	7301FQ	19.50	41.00	69.53	.67	11257.10
PIONEER	3335	21.09	43.24	65.81	.59	8338.36

DONALD LEISHEAR PLANTED: 4/13/98
DAMASCUS, MD CHOPPED: 8/25/98
MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Brand	Hybrid	70% Moist	Harvest DM	Digestibility IVDC	Adj NE-L	Income /Acre
DOEBLER'S	737XP	19.44	42.45	75.13	.77	15020.43
PIONEER	33Y18	22.71	43.41	76.00	.78	18423.26
SECOND TRIAL						
DOEBLER'S	737XP	18.43	39.14	73.91	.75	13957.86
PIONEER	33V08 (Bt)	20.09	39.15	76.34	.80	17194.80

IVDC = *In vitro* digestibility estimate.

Adjusted NE-L = Net energy of lactation (Mcal/LB).

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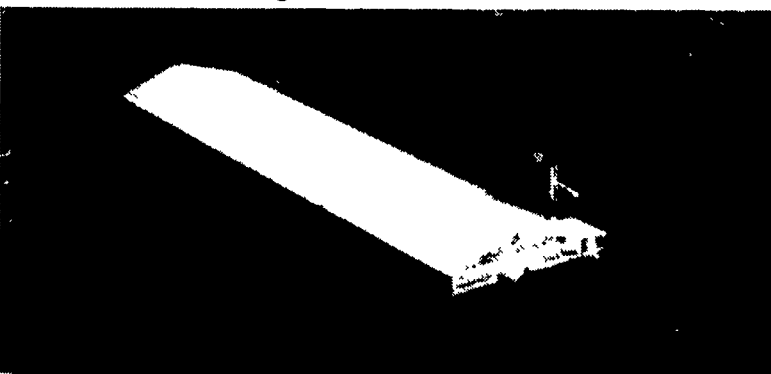
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