



dhia

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return. As always, work together with your vet and nutritionist to attack these sorts of problems.

Using your DHIA records can be a challenge, but the result will always be profitable.

Looking forward to hearing from more of you.

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 — 2.3 bu., 4.12 cwt.
- Wheat, No. 2 — 2.69 bu., 4.49 cwt.
- Barley, No. 3 — 1.50 bu., 3.20 cwt.
- Oats, No. 2 — 1.38 bu., 4.29 cwt.

- Soybeans, No. 1 — 5.32 bu., 8.88 cwt.
- Ear Corn — 60.24 ton, 3.01 cwt.
- Alfalfa Hay — 114.25 ton, 5.71 cwt.
- Mixed Hay — 115.75 ton, 5.79 cwt.
- Timothy Hay — 108.75 ton, 5.44 cwt.

got milk?

Dairyman To Dairyman

GEORGE CUDOC
PA DHIA Consulting Dairyman



with the high fat test. You indicate that many cows are getting thin and seem to lag in appetite.

These factors would make us think that there should be the tell-tale "sweetbreath" sign in your cows.

Your cows are mobilizing fat reserves extremely fast and will result in subclinical — if not full-blown — ketosis.

You need to talk with your vet for suggestions on treatment of the severe cows. Making some diet changes will aid the less extreme cows.

The fact that most of your mature cows show this same tendency toward very high fat levels in early lactation suggests that the problem starts in the dry cow period.

If a few cows were showing the high fat levels, then we would need to look at factors that affect individual cows such as illness, injury, obesity, or something that may suppress feed intake of individuals versus the whole herd.

Your heifers do not show high fat tests although they are fed the same pre-fresh diet as the older cows. This again suggests that the problem actually starts during the dry cow period since your heifers were not part of that management group.

This is what I would do to correct this problem:

- Look at cows as they near dry off and adjust diets to maintain body scores between 3.5 and 4.5.
- Maintain some grain feeding to dry cows and provide a balanced diet.
- Provide a balanced diet to close-up cows 21 days before calving, using much of the same feeds she will eat when milking.
- Pay attention to dry matter intakes, especially one week before, and take all necessary steps to keep her eating.

This may seem to sound too easy, but paying attention to details during the pre-calving period has the potential for huge economic

QUESTION: What is the proper time when cows should reach peak production? Ours peak at 30 to 40 days and then go down? This does not seem right, but we do not know what to do.

ANSWER: Normally we see cows peak between 55 and 65 days in milk. It is okay to alter from these numbers, such as in herds that use BST early in lactation.

Cows that peak early in lactation tell us that the diet following calving is out of balance, or that the pre-fresh period of the cows is not conducive to good performance.

Some statistics are found in your DHIA program that can help us pinpoint where we should look to solve your problem.

Let us first look at what information can help locate the trouble and then maybe we can find some changes are needed to correct your peaking problems.

What is most noticeable about your herd is the extremely high butterfat test in mature cows from zero to 40 days in milk.

First lactation animals average 4 percent butterfat during this period, and appear to have normal fat tests as lactation proceeds.

Second and higher lactation cows on the other hand show fat levels averaging more than 4.6 percent during this same (early) period. Some cows' early lactation milk tests as high as 6.5 percent.

The normal range of fat test for Holsteins in early lactation should be somewhere from 3.8 percent to 4.2 percent.

Your cows are significantly higher than this and often times we see severe weight loss associated



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