

Dairyman To Dairyman

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PA DHIA
Consulting
Dairyman



QUESTION: We started to test for MUN two months ago and are wondering what should MUN values be for our herd?

ANSWER: You may have heard or read that average MUN values should fall between 10 and 14. This is the range where we see the highest and most consistent production on all cows that make up the test database recorded by Pa.DHIA.

It is in this range where "individual" cows use dietary protein most efficiently. However, when we look at the "herd" overall, we should consider some additional factors.

Recently, I visited a herd that gives us a good example of a factor that can tell us where to set the goal for MUN within the acceptable range. We will start by observing that this is a single ration TMR.

This single factor presents a challenge as we try to determine protein-feeding efficiency through MUN testing.

We see the following numbers in this herd:

Lactation 1

0-40 days	ave. MUN - 7.4
41-99 days	ave. MUN - 8.9
100-199 days	ave. MUN - 11.3
200-299 days	ave. MUN - 12.7
300+ days	ave. MUN - 13.5
Ave./total	11.8

These numbers represent a common trend in herds that use a single-ration TMR. This type of feeding strategy calls for a different evaluation of the MUN numbers.

The low numbers in the early lactation cows indicate that there is a lack of dietary (especially rumen available) protein. This is easy to fix, but you need to realize that once the trend is established for this herd, fixing the protein for early lactation will also cause the tail-enders to become somewhat inefficient in protein utilization.

My recommendation is to look at the profile of the herd first.

In this herd, we used the first lactation group to set parameters because 52 percent of cows in the herd are first lactation. Furthermore, the distribution of milking 2-year-olds was even, through days-in-milk.

The feeding strategy used in this herd is becoming more common. When we give all the cows the same opportunity for feed consumption, we must address where we generate the most profit potential and that is during the early part of lactation.

We contacted this herd's nutritionist and fixed the diet to optimize production potential while still maintaining rumen health. We did

so by using less of bypass protein and more of soluble protein.

We now anticipate that the MUN numbers should rise throughout the lactation and the average here needs to be 13 to 14.

This change will address the animals with the highest potential profit along with some slight protein waste in late lactation. Here we even got the bonus points — reduced cost to the dairyman.



Pa. Tobacco Market Report

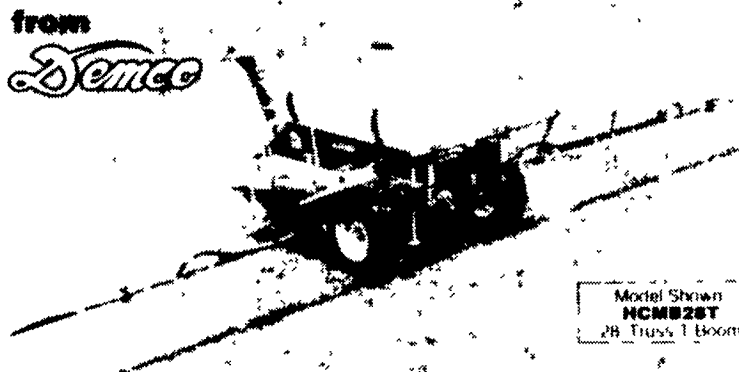
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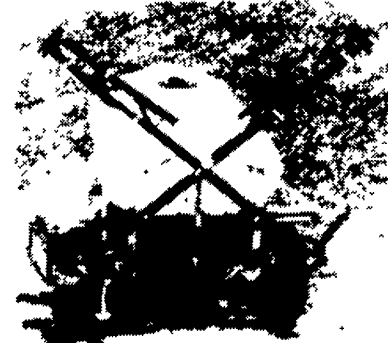
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Scott Williams
Training Coordinator

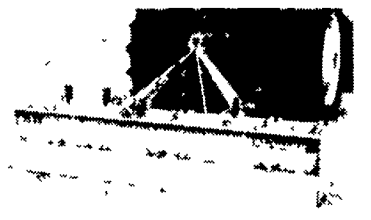
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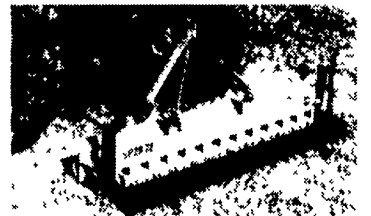
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