

**dhia**

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was very white and coarse in appearance.

I thought that I was sure to see damage at the hock area, but it was just the contrary. The hocks were probably the best that I have encountered in a free stall barn.

What I did see was bald front knees.

Yes, bald. Apparently due to the sand grinding off the hair when the cows got up.

As we walked further, a cow was laying in the alley and the dairyman said that rarely occurred. I bent down to see that her knees were red, sore, and hot in the bald area when I touched her.

I also saw some cows laying with front knees extended and the same abrasive appearance.

We talked and apparently the sand supplier had changed sand for use at this farm a short time ago. We needed to change this sand back to a finer grade, before we had some major problems with these cows.

The second farm I had in mind was on my schedule the next day.

I had been at this dairy a month ago to help celebrate the building of a new facility with an open house.

During that time, something was brought to my attention — stall acceptance for standing was great, but only a small percentage of the cows would lie down.

Unlike the other farm, the hock area was showing a lot of damage.

When I returned to work with the dairyman a month later, the damage had spread to the front knee.

The barn was built with rubber mats on top of a concrete cow bed. The thought was to use sparing amounts of sawdust to keep the cows clean.

has been or will continue to be the correct one for us. That link is cow language and our ability to decipher it.

I recently visited two different farms and came across a similar type of problem. Let's talk about the two and see the common link that both share.

The first farm milks near 200 cows in a freestall facility, and two different stall bases are used.

A post-fresh group lies on rubber filled mattresses that are bedded with sand.

The rest of the herd rests in stalls with asphalt in the bottom, covered with generous portions of sand.

Going from sawdust to sand a couple of years ago was viewed as the right decision because of reduced somatic cell counts with their Pa.DHIA records.

They also experience less coliform initiated mastitis cases.

Cow comfort was reported to be at a very high level and no one has second-guessed the decision to move to sand bedding.

Upon my arrival, we proceeded to the barn to view the cows and I saw something that made me look at the cows' feet and legs. The sand

### Dairyman To Dairyman

GEORGE CUDOC

PA DHIA  
Consulting  
Dairyman



**QUESTION:** What would be an effective choice for stall bedding in our new freestall facility?

**ANSWER:** Giving a direct answer to this question would make some people happy and others very mad.

I really do not think there is an answer that will fit all situations.

Cow comfort, cost, availability, disease control, and handling are all issues that must be addressed before the "right" choice is made.

To complicate the issue even further, dairymen have had success with just about every choice of bedding material. What one will condemn, others will tout as the best.

There is one common link that can help us determine if our choice

### 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 — 2.42 bu., 4.34 cwt.     |
| Wheat, No. 2 — 2.42 bu., 4.04 cwt.    |
| Barley, No. 3 — 1.35 bu., 2.88 cwt.   |
| Oats, No. 2 — 1.42 bu., 4.42 cwt.     |
| Soybeans, No. 1 — 4.25 bu., 7.10 cwt. |
| Ear Corn — 73.40 ton, 3.67 cwt.       |
| Alfalfa Hay — 90.00 ton, 4.5 cwt.     |
| Mixed Hay — 90.75 ton, 4.54 cwt.      |
| Timothy Hay — 92.50 ton, 4.6 cwt.     |

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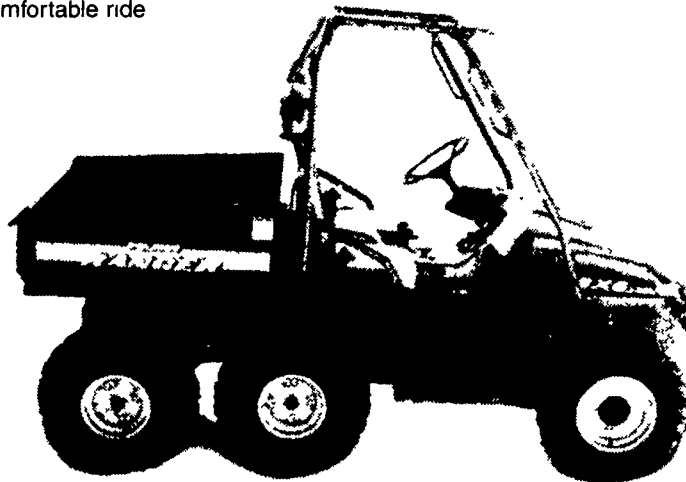
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