Are Best Available

(Continued from Page A36) dry matter can reduce milk production.

High fiber contents as in whole cottonseed, beet pulp, sunflower and soy hulls mean that the inclusion in a dairy ration should not be high in order to maximize milk production.

It can, however, replace

some missing hay fiber in rations of high-milking cows to avoid rumen acidosis and low fat test in milk. Of course, the use of by-products varies by season, locality and price.

The local factor for use of some by-products is interesting. The Northwest is known for heavy fruit and vegetable production. This is reflected in their heavy use of apple pomace, corn cannery waste, beet pulp, beet molasses, peas and potato culls for feeding in dairy rations above any other region in the United States.

The Midwest exceeds in use of field corn by-products and sunflower weeds, while the Southwest feeds the most almond hulls, carrot culls, cotton gin and seed by-products, grape pomace, grape raisin waste, millet grain, oat grain, rye grain, sorghum grain, wheat grain, sweet corn, rice hulls, and wheat by-products.

Some of these feed alternatives are almost unknown in

the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions, while we rank first in use of soybean seed and sugarcane molasses although we are a close second for alfalfa meal, flax meal, rape meal and soybean meal.

The Southeast ranks first in citrus pulp, peanut hulls, turnips, citrus molasses and soybean hulls. Considering that many of our high producing dairy herds are in the Northwest and Southwest regions, their heavy use of these alternative by-products indicates the by-products' nutritive and economic value.

Overall the most widely used dairy feeds were alfalfa hay and silage, grass hay and silage, corn silage, clover hay and silage, small grain grazing, soybean oil meal, corn, barley, wheat grains and molasses. By-products entered at different times and location, presenting challenges to calculating optimum feeding rations for different production levels of our cows.

Grazing, part or full-time, can be an enormous saver of feeding costs, but fewer than one in five of dairy farmers in this region is taking advantage of it for all kinds of reasons — real or imagined.

A local large-animal veterinarian has collected data on this.

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