

**dhia**


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**Dairyman To Dairyman**

GEORGE CUDOC

PA DHIA  
Consulting  
Dairyman



Two groups of cows, a low and a high, are each fed a different diet. The main difference is that the low group is fed only the silage grain mix while the high group is fed additional western grown alfalfa.

Two thirds of the herd is in the high group.

The first thing that I look at is the history of production for the herd with butterfat test trends being my focus.

The high group to low group change in butterfat percent is minimal even though we normally see fat tests rise and production decrease as we increase days in milk. I would guess that this is because there is no long stem forage that is fed to low cows.

Knowing what we do about the diets, this is expected. More recent test day information shows fat dropping to 3.1 percent for the herd.

**QUESTION:** Why has our percent butterfat dropped drastically even though we increased dry hay in the diet?

**ANSWER:** Questions like this often require a bit of background information.

This herd consists of all Holstein cows that normally test 3.6 to 3.7 percent butterfat.

The feeding system is a PMR (partially mixed ration) that consists of corn silage, haylage, and dry grain mixed together with hay fed outside of the mix.

Since we have two different feeding strategies for the two groups, we need to examine the fat test drop in each group.

The high group is still about two-thirds of the herd with butterfat test values down to 2.8 percent. The low group actually rose this month to 3.7 percent butterfat.

Now we can focus on changes surrounding the high group.

When I visited the farm, I saw a new mixer wagon in the barn. The feed looked extremely fine in front of the high group. There appeared to be little if any cud chewing going on.

Since the purchase of the new mixer was one week before the low butterfat test, I focused there.

The dealer where the mixer was purchased said they did not need the hay kit and nobody else had used one to date.

The sequence of loading feed was silage, haylage, grain, and then hay from the 4x8 bales. It took a long time for the hay to mix thoroughly. This extended time also reprocessed the rest of the forage and the result was the very fine ration found in front of the high cows.

Why did the fat test of the low group not drop?

With no hay in their diet, the mixing time was actually less, due to the efficiency of the new mixer. Fiber particle length stayed the same and therefore rumen health stayed the same.

How do we handle this problem?

I instructed the feeders to put the hay in the mixer first and mix

it until the hay was processed correctly. We then planned to back off five minutes from that time.

Next, we put in the rest of the ingredients in the same order as before. Now we mixed just long enough for the feed to appear the same from one end to the other.

Suddenly, the same components of the diet put together this way looked totally different.

Within days, the cows were increasing their cud chewing and by next test, the fat results were back to normal.

Future plans are to get the hay kit. Fortunately, little permanent damage seems to have occurred. This was due to the dairyman acting on what his cows told him.

Without DHIA testing how can this be done and who would listen?

## Slocum To Speak At Farmer Dinner

CAMP HILL (Cumberland Co.) — State Senator William L. Slocum, chairman of the Senate Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee, will be the guest speaker at a fundraising dinner for FARMER on Thursday, Oct. 14 at the Station One Banquet Center, Greenville.

Sen. Slocum will discuss the major agricultural issues facing the General Assembly. Sen. Slocum represents Pennsylvania's 25th senatorial district which includes all of Cameron, Elk, Forest, McKean, Potter and Warren counties and parts of Clearfield, Erie, Jefferson and Venango counties.

FARMER, Farmers Allied For Responsive, More Effective Representation, is the bipartisan political action committee of the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau, a voluntary statewide farm organization. "FARMER is dedicated to helping elect and keep supporters of agriculture in the General Assembly," said Harold Curtis of Columbus, Warren County, a member of both the FARMER Committee and Pennsylvania Farm Bureau's

State Board of Directors. Last year FARMER endorsed and supported the campaigns of 67 candidates for the state House of Representatives and 15 state Senate candidates.

"Sen. Slocum is a prime supporter of private property rights and has stood firm in his opposition to unreasonable environmental regulations," said Curtis. "His persistence helped push Northeast Dairy Compact legislation through the Senate. He is a true friend of agriculture."

The FARMER fundraiser is open to the public. The cost of the event, which includes an all-you-can-eat buffet dinner, is \$35 per person, or \$50 per person and spouse. The Station One Banquet Center is located at 28 Sixth Avenue, Greenville. The fundraising event will begin at 6:45 p.m.

To obtain tickets, send a personal check, payable to "FARMER" to: Pennsylvania Farm Bureau, P.O. Box 8736, Camp Hill, PA 17001-8736. Deadline for ordering tickets is Sept. 30th. For additional information, contact Curtis at (814) 665-3143.

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