


dhia

Scott Williams
Training Coordinator

Call 1-800-DHI-TEST, fax (814) 865-3294
Web site <http://www.dhia.psu.edu>
Pennsylvania Dairy Herd Improvement Association
DHIA Service Center, Orchard Road, University Park, PA 16802

Dairyman To Dairyman



GEORGE CUDOC

PA DHIA
Consulting
Dairyman

Question: What are some nutritional considerations during transitional cow care? Should we use anionic salts?

The biggest challenge during the prefresh or transitional period is dry matter intake (DMI). We know that DMI is suppressed by anionic salts simply because the cows do not like them. We should avoid feeding these salts whenever possible. Some care in our feeding programs can avoid the

need for these products.

We spend all of our time and energy making the best feed for the milking animals and little to no time planning the feed needs of the dry cows. Some land should be set aside for the sole purpose of growing forage for our dry cows. Obviously, this is not practical for most farms in the northeast when it comes to feeds such as corn silage. The number of dry cows simply is not large enough to warrant special facilities for the storage of such feed. Hay, on the other hand, is a different story. It is easy to set aside a small field or two to grow hay that is more suitable for our dry cows. By watching soil nutrient levels and restricting the use of manure on this land, we can produce low-potassium

forages that can eliminate the need for anionic salts in the transition diet. Another alternative would be to purchase the forage needs of the transition group from farms that have no animal units on them. Hay from these farms typically is lower in potassium due to cost of applying this nutrient and lack of potassium from animal waste.

There are many farms in the northeast that can do little to reduce potassium levels of the forage that is fed. It is common to see alfalfa testing between 3 and 4 percent potassium. Even grasses, which are commonly used for dry cow diets, approach 3 percent due to heavy manure usage on farms. When we couple this with corn silage potassium levels at 1.5 to 2 percent, we can experience some real problems. High dietary potassium increases blood pH and if severe, can reduce the cow's ability to mobilize calcium. This triggers milk fever, either clinical or sub-clinical, and leads to increased nutritional stress. This stress contributes to retained placentas, ketosis, displacements, and sometimes mastitis.

How can we tell if we need to use anionic salts? Milk fever is certainly a clue that we may

need to use the salts. We need to make sure of the dietary balance for these prefresh cows because even the correct type of forage can cause problems when not balanced properly. A useful tool when we are not sure about the need for anionic salts is the urine pH. Dry Holstein cows and especially those in the last three weeks before calving should have urine pH readings between 6.0 and 6.5. Jerseys should be 5.8 to 6.2. Levels below these may not be a problem but we need to be certain that we are not reducing intakes due to too much anionic salts.

Everyone seems to have a different answer about the mineral balance for transition cows. Remember these are only guidelines and should be used just as a starting point.

Calcium	1%-1.2%
Phosphorus.....	0.4%-0.45%
Magnesium.....	0.4%
Sodium	0.1%
Potassium	0.7%-1.5%
Sulfur	0.3%-0.4%
Chloride	<1%

As a final note, I must say that I see a wide range of quality when it comes to feeding our dry cows. We may be able to get away with something less than optimal for forages on long-term dry cows. When it comes to prefresh cows there is no room in the diet for less than the best we have to offer. We

have to realize that during this time our cows are already reducing intakes. Therefore, we must do everything possible to maintain a high DMI if we expect these cows to produce at an optimum level. I encourage dairymen to make the transitional period a planned part of the milking herd.


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 — 2.34 bu., 4.19 cwt.
- Wheat, No. 2 — 2.35 bu., 3.92 cwt.
- Barley, No. 3 — 1.59 bu., 3.41 cwt.
- Oats, No. 2 — 1.49 bu., 4.63 cwt.
- Soybeans, No. 1 — 4.32 bu., 7.21 cwt.
- Ear Corn — 72.92 ton, 3.65 cwt.
- Alfalfa Hay — 134.25 ton, 6.71 cwt.
- Mixed Hay — 131.25 ton, 6.56 cwt.
- Timothy Hay — 129.25 ton, 6.46 cwt.

MRI - At Affordable



800-298-2222
Call 8 AM - 5 PM, M-F

Most Insurances Accepted

- New state-of-the-art Open MRI
- Most experienced Radiologists in the area
- Friendly professional staff
- Reports to your doctor within 24 hours
- We accept \$475.00 cash for a normal study, including contrast agent

It's Worth The Drive!


To offset the falling prices over the years farmers have followed the advice of agri-industry, agri-business, government and economists...

We got **efficient**.
Got **bigger**.
Used the **best technology**.
Got **lean and mean**.

We tried everything - or did we?

Have you tried the *National Farmers Organization?* NFO believes that it is *better* for producers to partner with their neighbors in the marketplace-- Than to partner with agri-industry and be absorbed!

What do YOU think?



Phone: 800-247-2110
E-Mail: NFO@netins.net
Internet site: <http://nfo.org>
2505 Elwood Dr., Ames, IA 50010
Weekend Dairy Lane: 800-247-2199

Stop by and see us at the PA Farm Show
Booth 533 on the Main Floor.


Lancaster Farming Classified Ads
Now searchable on the Internet.

✓ Check Out Our Web Site

www.lancasterfarming.com

SITE EXCAVATION

Installation of H.D.P.E. Liner Systems for:
Dairy, Hog, and Veal Manure Storage Facilities
Golf Course and Recreational Ponds



New, Expanding or Existing Operations Call For Free Estimates

FEATURES:
60 mil thick H.D.P.E. Liner
Geotextile underlayment
Leak detection system
Economical Manure Storage
Seals manure in, subsurface water out
Concrete ramp for manure agitation and pumping

MANADA CONSTRUCTION CO.

1942 Camp Swatara Road • Myerstown, PA 17067
Ph; (717) 933-8853 • Fax: (717) 933-8078

!!UNBEATABLE PRICES!!

SUPER TOUGH STEEL BUILDINGS



SAVE UP TO 60%

- Equipment storage
- Workshops
- Hay and animal shelter



Available models:
25 x 32 (2 left) 45 x 90 (1 left)
30 x 44 (3 left) 50 x 100 (2 left)
40 x 62 (4 left) 55 x 150 (2 left)
call for other sizes

Factory Direct **800/825-5059**

HAY, STRAW & GRAIN SALE

Every Thursday at 12 NOON

Vintage Sales Stables, Inc.
(Rt. 30, 10 miles east of Lancaster in Paradise, PA)

For info:
(717) 442-4181 bus.
(610) 458-8518 home

BOWMAN'S STOVES & PATIO

Vermont Castings

Wood Stoves, GAS STOVES AND FIREPLACES

1060 Division Highway 322 East, Ephrata, PA 17522
1 Block East of Rt. 222
(717) 733-4973
800-642-0310

www.bowmansstove.com
Mon, Tues, Wed, 10 to 6; Thurs, Fri, 10 to 8; Sat, 10 to 4