

dhia

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Your guess is as good as mine. The average herd in Pennsylvania with a five-point drop in percent butterfat during June, July, August, and September lost about \$5,500 in potential income. This is not exactly correct because the same reasons for the drop in butterfat during these months are also the same reasons we get slightly higher milk yields. Let us discuss the causes of this and decide if we can achieve a reasonable trade-off.

First we need to examine the statement made about this particular herd and its non-changing feed program. With the information that was gathered we see that these cows are being fed the same this fall as last. Corn silage, hay crop silage, hi-moisture corn, protein concentrate, and hay make up the diet year-round. Careful consideration has been given to macro and micro nutrient balance. This seems like a diet that is well balanced and deserving to be put in front of any cow

yet there is a reason that we should examine what the cows tell us and not what the ration spreadsheet says. In this case, I am quite certain we are looking at one of the most common mistakes made in trying to feed our herds — the paper diet is not the one the cow is consuming.

Further study into what this herd is eating tells us why there is a butterfat problem. Cows are housed in the barn at night and are fed cafeteria style according to the formulated ration. During the day, they are haylage feed which happens to be round bale silage. The mistake made was to assume dry matter intake remained the same during the past few months. With no known way to measure the haylage consumed outside, there can be a large shift in the amount of fiber consumed from forage. While inside the barn, the cows eat everything except a portion of their long hay and the problem now becomes compounded. How do we correct this? In my experience, it is better to guess the DMI too low than too high. Rumen health will suffer and lead to other problems when a diet gets out of balance from a fiber standpoint for more than

just a short time. When we cannot measure what the cows are eating, we must make an educated guess about DMI.

Your cows will tell you when you feed them correctly. Use your DHIA records along with on-the-farm indicators such as manure scoring, body condition scoring and DMI to adjust diets to maintain proper rumen health. This will serve you and your cows well and give you the opportunity to enjoy some of that \$5,500 worth of lost opportunity.


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 — 2.46 bu., 4.40 cwt.
- Wheat, No.2 — 2.451 bu., 4.09 cwt.
- Barley, No.3 — 1.74 bu., 3.72 cwt.
- Oats, No.2 — 1.54 bu., 4.79 cwt.
- Soybeans, No.1 — 4.75 bu., 7.94 cwt.
- Ear Corn — 77.03 ton, 3.85 cwt.
- Alfalfa Hay — 135.00 ton, 6.75 cwt.
- Mixed Hay — 142.50 ton, 7.13 cwt.
- Timothy Hay — 141.25 ton, 7.06 cwt.

Dairyman To Dairyman



GEORGE CUDOC
PA DHIA
Consulting
Dairyman

ues into early fall. What can we do?

This is the most asked question since summer. Payment emphasis has been on fat more now than at any other time in history. Many of the dairymen that I talk to feel that their cows have dropped no less than five points in the last several months. They are looking at past fall and winter production and know that these same fat prices during those times can represent quite a bit of added income. Will these prices hold?

Question: We keep our feeding program the same throughout the year but in late summer, our butterfat hits a yearly low and contin-

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Fair Dates

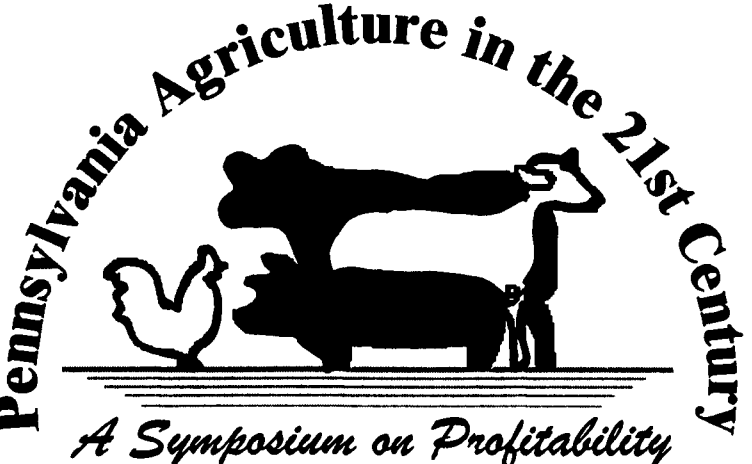
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- Sept. 14 - 16 North East Community Fair
- Sept. 17 - 23 Beaver Community Fair ; Gratz Fair
- Sept. 19 - 23 Harmony Grange Fair
- Sept. 20 - 22 Southern Lancaster County Fair
- Sept. 21 - 23 Oley Valley Community Fair
- Sept. 23 - 30 Bloomsburg Fair
- Sept. 26 - 29 Morrison Cove Community Fair
- Sept. 26 - 30 Ephrata Fair
- Sept. 27 - 29 West Lampeter Community Fair
- Sept. 29 - Oct. 1 Tri-Valley Community Fair
- Oct. 2 - 5 Hollidaysburg Community Fair
- Oct. 4 - 7 New Holland Farmers Fair
- Oct. 9 - 13 Manheim Community Farm Show
- Oct. 12 - 14 Unionville Community Fair
- Oct. 13 - 15 Uniontown Poultry & Farm Show
- Oct. 17 - 21 Dillsburg Community Fair

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