

dhia


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Dairyman To Dairyman

GEORGE CUDOC

PA DHIA
Consulting
Dairyman



Dairyman To Dairyman

Question: A while back you talked about freshening heifers at a younger age and poorer milk production as a result. Did you recommend that they go back to older age freshening?

No! There are many good reasons for calving heifers near 24 months of age. The recommendation that I gave to these dairymen was to address the needs of the heifers so that size and age disparity does not grow as we decrease age at first calving.

First, here are some vary good reasons to consider calving heifers at 24 months of age instead of the customary 28 months.

- Accumulation of additional

cost of rearing heifers for 120 days x cost per day (est. \$1.50) = \$180

- Accumulation of heifer replacements at the rate of 4.2% per month (1 month divided by 24 months)

- Assuming equally productive lives, increase in non-productive days

- Delay of milk income potential

- Delay of genetic gains from heifer replacement

The greater number of heifers that tie up cash flow can be offset by the sale of replacements to other dairies as long as cull rates remain reasonable at near 33%. In reality, this seldom happens and cull rates over 40%

are often seen. This puts a great deal of pressure on the herd's ability to just maintain size.

Previous heifer management prompted heifers to calve at 28 months. These heifers produced 19843# milk in 305 days and had 305 mature equivalent (ME) of 24216#. The new heifers are now calving for the first time at 24 months and produce 17569# milk with a 305 ME of 23840#. This results in 2274# less milk per animal with an estimated \$273 value (\$12.00/cwt). The greater dollars generated by the older heifers in this case makes up for the increased cost of rearing them. We cannot, however, justify some of the other potential losses. For this reason, we discussed what might be going wrong with the new heifer management program.

Sometimes the most significant change in management is no change at all. The theory here is that past heifer management bred heifers at 19 months of age and these heifers were housed

with dry cows shortly after they were confirmed pregnant. Therefore, these heifers did not go on the maintenance dry cow diet until past 20 months of age. Currently heifers are treated the same way, but now this diet change occurs at 16 months. Did we tell our heifers to slow down their growth? Without heifer measurements before the management change, we can only rely on instinct and maybe some current measurements against breed averages. We still are calving at the younger age, but the heifers are allowed to stay in their age group until 20 months of age (pregnant 5 months). The plan is to do similar measurements, with milk starts and peaks as before, to have some idea if our plan is working, at the earliest possible time.

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 — 2.50 bu., 4.47 cwt.
Wheat, No.2 — 2.32 bu., 3.87 cwt.
Barley, No.3 — 1.77 bu., 3.79 cwt.
Oats, No.2 — 1.55 bu., 4.84 cwt.
Soybeans, No.1 — 4.94 bu., 8.25 cwt.
Ear Corn — 77.28 ton, 3.86 cwt.
Alfalfa Hay — 128.75 ton, 6.44 cwt.
Mixed Hay — 125.00 ton, 6.25 cwt.
Timothy Hay — 125.00 ton, 6.25 cwt.



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Used/Rental Liquid Manure Equipment

SPREADERS

- (2) 1996 Knight 8030's, (1) with Lid and 21.5x16.1 Tires; (1) w/o Lid and 22.5 Truck Tires, Both in Good Shape
- 1999 Houle 5,250 Gal. 28Lx26 Tires.....\$21,100
- 1999 Houle 4800 Gal. 28Lx26, Brakes.....CALL
- Balzer 3350 Vacuum.....\$15,900
- (1) Butler 3300 gal. tank w/21.5x16.1 tires, tank is in good shape.....\$3,500
- (1) Better Bilt 3150 tank w/21.5x16.1 tires, tank is in good shape.....\$3,500
- Badger 1,500 gal. Top Fill, Tank is Solid.....\$2,150
- Mack Truck w/4800 gal. Vacuum Tank.....Coming In, CALL

PUMPS

- Houle 32' Lagoon Pump.....\$5,750
- Houle 9.5' 3 Pt. Agi-Pump, Rebuilt.....\$3,350
- Houle 12' Agi-Pump on 3 Pt. Sliding, 1000 PTO.. \$6,900
- (2) Houle Maxi Pumps, 28".....CALL
- Houle Irrigation Pumps, on trailers, hyd. primers.....CALL
- 1999 Houle 12' Super Pump, 1,000 PTO, Twin Nozzles.....\$5,900
- Houle 32' and 42' Agi Pumps.....\$7,500 to \$10,000
- 1998 Houle 8/12' Super Pump, Rental Unit.....\$6,950
- Husky 40' Lagoon Pump, 540 PTO, Like New Condition, 3 Yrs. Old.....\$5,000

MISCELLANEOUS

- Rubber Tire Scrapers, 3 pt. & Skid Steer; Also Push Blades
- (2) CADMAN 2625 Hard Hose Reels.....CALL

This Week's Special



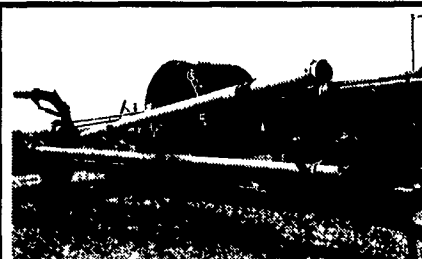
**DeLaval 3,000 Gal.
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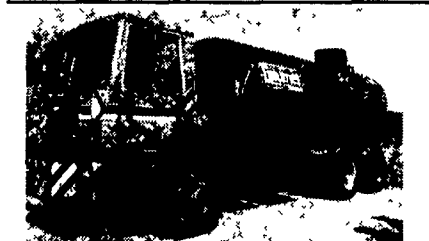
Better Bilt 3,400 gal., 21.5x16.1 tires, exc. condition.....\$5,500



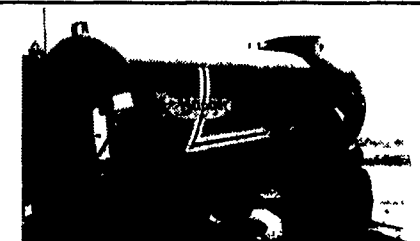
Butler 3300 gal., Good Shape.....\$3,500



Badger 20 Lagoon Pump.....\$2,000



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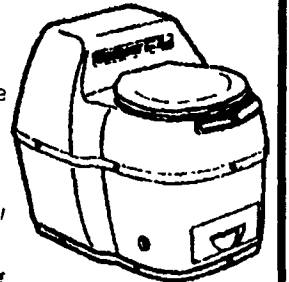
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