

dhia

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Question: My cows are not milking very well. What might be the problem?

This commonly asked question came about three weeks ago. Rather than answer it, I will use it as an illustration for the importance of cooperation between DHIA technician and dairyman in the effort to generate good management information.

When I first heard from this dairyman, I pulled a copy of his last two PA DHIA MUN and Herd Summary II reports. His herd did indicate some nutritional problems as seen by his MUN values, but other factors just did not line up. To be honest, I was wondering what this guy expected. Now I know all dairy producers desire to make more milk, all the time, but we need to be realistic. This herd is averaging 60 plus pounds of milk at 216


days in milk. It would be nice to get more, but this herd has a rolling herd average over 17,000. It should also be noted that the 150 day adjusted average has ranged from 55 pounds to 60 pounds over the course of a year. Lastly, daily test period average was 60 pounds at the highest point for the last year. My conclusion was that considering these factors, this herd was performing as we would expect. MUN testing had just started, therefore I could not determine if past production was suppressed due to improperly balanced diets, other management considerations, or genetics. I felt that something could be done now with MUN at six.

I paid a visit to the farm. To make a long story short, we were both surprised by each other's milk pound evaluation. This

Dairyman To Dairyman

GEORGE CUDOC

PA DHIA
Consulting
Dairyman



dairyman based his evaluation on milk from the bulk tank, while I used what the cows told me through their records. These should be the same; why aren't they? I will start out by saying that any form of records is only as good as we make it. The input side of the milk calculation for AM-PM tested herds needs to be very accurate. The first thing that absolutely must be noted correctly is what happened before the DHIA technician arrived for the testing procedures.

A-P testing, as it is commonly referred to, involves collecting milk samples and milk weights that will be used to estimate daily output of the cow. This requires establishing what time the cow had in which to produce this milk. We need to know when she was milked last. Here is what can happen when we are not precise about that one piece of data.

We can easily see that even 15 minutes can change calculations substantially for daily milk calculations. Now apply this to smaller herds and the milk pounds per cow can change dramatically. A herd with 40 cows will be 4 to 5 pounds different in daily average between calculated and shipments out of the bulk tank. To successfully use any records we need to start at the very basics and not assume anything. Comparing cow total weights against bulk tank weights is done every month. This comparison is found on the backside of PA DHIA Herd Summary I at the bottom, in the middle. It can also be found on PA DHIA Herd Summary II on the back left side on the bottom.

We see that information about what we did before the technician arrives can be as important as the accurate recording of milk weights. Also, take care that you know what the bulk tank weights really are. Is there home or calf use? Is there discarded milk from the tank for mastitis or any other reason? When these issues are addressed, the use of the information becomes so much more valuable. By teaming with your DHIA technician, you can be sure that you are using the correct information. When a situation like this happens, I visit the farm to

work with the dairyman and to make certain we are reading from the same page. By the way, in this case adjustments were made from MUN analysis and we saw a milk response, with less grain in the diet. What a bonus to using good records!

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 — 2.51 bu., 4.49 cwt.
- Wheat, No.2 — 2.33 bu., 3.90 cwt.
- Barley, No.3 — 1.77 bu., 3.78 cwt.
- Oats, No.2 — 1.55 bu., 4.83 cwt.
- Soybeans, No.1 — 5.02 bu., 8.39 cwt.
- Ear Corn — 76.75 ton, 3.84 cwt.
- Alfalfa Hay — 128.00 ton, 6.4 cwt.
- Mixed Hay — 121.75 ton, 6.09 cwt.
- Timothy Hay — 121.25 ton, 6.06 cwt.



Morning milking weighed average per cow = 32# 1562# am.

Daily-calculated milk pounds at different milk intervals

4 50pm	6.15 pm	5 30am	7 45am	1562# am.	2890.74 daily
4 35pm	6.00 pm	5.30am	7 45am	1562# am.	2842.99 daily
4 20pm	5:45 pm	5:30am	7.45am	1562# am	2796.79 daily
4.05pm	5:30 pm	5 30am	7:45am	1562# am.	2752.07 daily
3:50pm	5.15 pm	5 30am	7 45am	1562# am.	2708.75 daily
3 35pm	5.00 pm	5:30am	7 45am	1562# am	2666.78 daily

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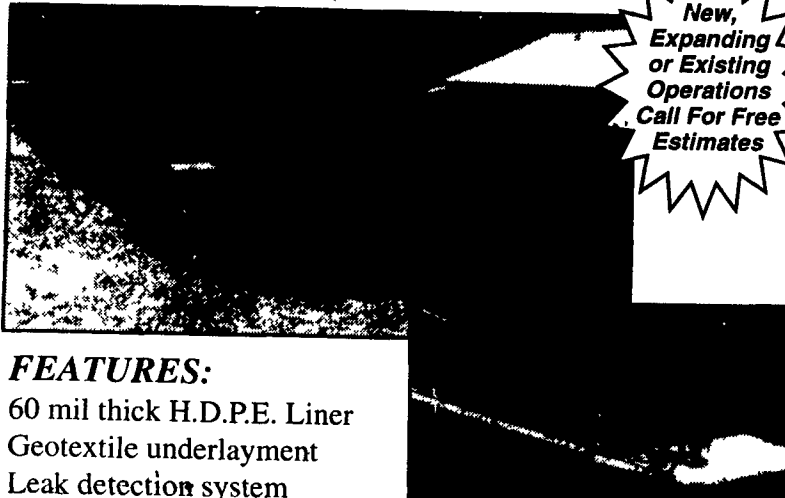


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