

dhia

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Question: When unexplained and unexpected drops in milk production occur, what should we look at first?

This is the question that I asked myself a few weeks ago. I was looking at data from a herd that was down in milk and did not know why. The cows told me that this was real and not just a perception because of

the staleness of the herd and extended days in milk. Just as a refresher, this herd stayed stable at 197 DIM and the percentage days in milk was increasing. At the same time, they also saw a 12+-pound drop in milk.

As I proceeded with possibilities that would make this happen I kept thinking that nutrition had to be the cause. The drought in the area has hasten-

Dairyman To Dairyman

GEORGE CUDOC
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ed more than normal changes in forage and I concentrated on this fact. I asked many questions and the answers were as I expected. I should have known from working with this herd in the past that they react to changes as any good manager would. I also knew that their nutritionist is exceptional and probably all these questions had already been asked. I was hoping that some detail had been overlooked and the answer would be easy.

We scheduled a farm visit and a week before the visit the dairyman called to say that they thought they stumbled onto the problem. A water sample was analyzed and what they found appeared to fit the production problem. The coliform count of the water was 21. In addition, the coliform count was made up of 12 from fecal contamination. The farm already has an ultraviolet light system for water treatment. This system seemed to fail largely due to the inability to keep buildup off the system. They reacted quickly and installed a chlorinating system from a local water treatment company.

When I got to the farm one

week after this installation, the cows were already showing a considerable response. Bulk tank shipments were up every milking and it was noted that individual cows would come to the parlor leaking milk. This was a welcome sign to the dairy family. Did the water change in the past few months due to the drought conditions?

I did some research into what is considered good water from a coliform standpoint. Of course for human consumption, the coliform count should be less than one. Cows are given a bit more leeway at a range of 20 to 50 before problems occur. Calves need water that is also less than one in coliform count. Since most

dairy farms share water between people and animals, it is advisable to check these levels and ensure that they are below one.

Water is the most used nutrient by our cows and yet the most overlooked. I felt somewhat stupid for falling into the trap of taking something like water quality for granted. Most of my years were spent actively dairying with the use of city water and I did not have to worry about coliform or other water considerations other than taste. If you stop to think that an average black and white cow producing as little as 50 pounds per day will need 24 to 27 gallons water, then you may be like me and vow not to take water for granted any longer.

Facility Siting:

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and "gain their confidence," said Wenger.

"But you have to get to them early, you have to get to them intelligently, and you have to treat them (right) and share some power and contact and meet (with them)," he said. This involves a lot more than simply attending the township meeting and "taking out an ad in the paper."

And if you bully that small percentage that are against any type of development, or opposed to large-scale family farms, "you're done," he noted, with lost community confidence.

"Act responsibly, admit mistakes, and share power,"

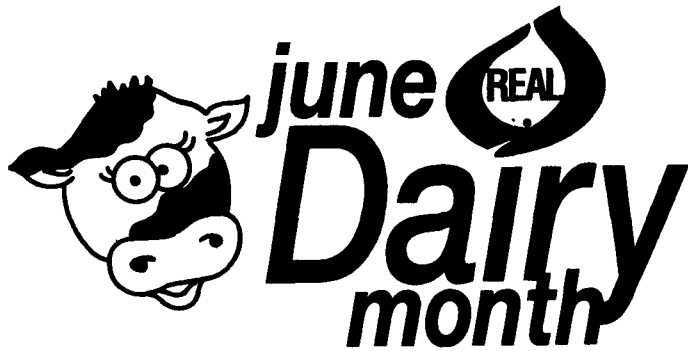
Wenger said.

"What would you pay not to have your company demonstrated against in the capitol of the state? Is that worth a thousand dollars? Five? Ten?"

"It's not just a permit that you're after. We're talking about a long-term relationship with your neighbors, your community. You have something you can build upon.

"You can't take shortcuts on this. If you take shortcuts on this, you'll pay later."

Wenger said what was done in the past didn't work. "And it continues to get us in bigger and bigger trouble," he said. We have to be smarter businesspeople and farmers, and better neighbors.

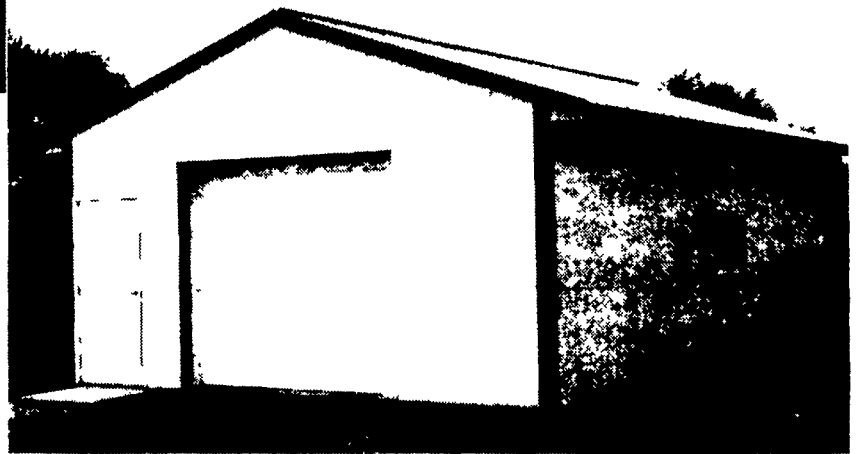


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