



**dhia**

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Training Coordinator

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Pennsylvania Dairy Herd Improvement Association  
DHIA Service Center, Orchard Road, University Park, PA 16802


**Question: What is the proper time when cows should reach peak production? Ours peak at 30 to 40 days and then go down. This does not seem right but we do not know what to do.**

Normally we see cows peak between 55 and 65 days in milk. It is okay to alter from these numbers such as in herds that use Bst very early in lactation. Cows that peak very early in lactation tell us that the diet following calving is out of balance or the pre-fresh period of the cows is not conducive to good performance. Some statistics are found in a DHIA program that can help pinpoint where we should look to solve your problem. Let us first look at what information can help locate the trouble and then maybe we can find some changes needed to correct your peaking problems.

The thing that is most noticeable about your herd is the extremely high butterfat test in mature cows from zero to 40 days in milk. First lactation animals average 4.0% butterfat during this period and appear to have normal fat tests as lactation proceeds. Second and higher lactation cows

on the other hand show fat levels averaging over 4.6% during this same period. Some cows exhibit fat test as high as 6.5% in early lactation. The normal range of fat test for Holsteins in early lactation should be somewhere from 3.8% to 4.2%. Your cows are significantly higher than this and often times we see severe weight loss associated with the high fat test. You indicate that many cows are getting thin and seem to lag in appetite. These factors would make us think that there should be the telltale "sweetbreath" sign in your cows. Your cows are mobilizing fat stores extremely fast and will result in sub-clinical if not full-blown ketosis. You need to talk with your vet for suggestions on treatment of the severe cows. Making some diet changes will aid the less severe cows. The fact that most of your mature cows show this same tendency toward very high fat levels in early lactation suggests that your problem starts in the dry cow period. If a few cows were showing the high fat levels then we would need to look at factors that affect individual cows such

**Dairyman To Dairyman**



**GEORGE CUDOC**

PA DHIA  
Consulting  
Dairyman

as illness, injury, obesity, or anything that could suppress feed intake of individuals versus the whole herd. Your heifers do not show high fat tests but are fed the same pre-fresh diet as the older cows. This could suggest that the problem actually starts during the dry cow period since your heifers were not part of that management group.

This is what I would do to correct this problem.

1. Look at cows as they near dry off and adjust diets to maintain body scores between 3.5 and 4.5.
2. Maintain some grain feeding to dry cows and provide a balanced diet.
3. Provide balanced diet to close-up cows 21 days before calving using much of the same feeds she will eat when milking.
4. Pay attention to dry matter intakes especially one week before and take all necessary steps to keep her eating.

This may seem to sound too

easy, but paying attention to details during the pre-calving period has the potential for huge economic return. As always, work together with your vet and nutritionist to attack these sorts of problems. Using your DHIA records can be a challenge but the result will always be profitable. Looking forward to hearing from more of you.

**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 — 2.5 bu., 4.4851 cwt.
- Wheat, No.2 — 2.31 bu., 3.86 cwt.
- Barley, No.3 — 1.5963 bu., 3.39 cwt.
- Oats, No.2 — 1.53 bu., 4.77 cwt.
- Soybeans, No.1 — 4.84 bu., 8.08 cwt.
- Ear Corn — 77.00 ton, 3.85 cwt.
- Alfalfa Hay — 108.75 ton, 5.44 cwt.
- Mixed Hay — 111.25 ton, 5.56 cwt.
- Timothy Hay — 111.25 ton, 5.56 cwt.

**Field Day Examines Ways To Market Your Knowledge, Sustainable Lifestyle**

**BROOKVILLE** (Jefferson Co.) — Saturday, July 8, Quiet Creek Herb Farm and School of Country Living will host a Field Day here, "Marketing Your Knowledge and Sustainable Lifestyle," from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

In collaboration with Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture (PASA) and North Central Cooperative Extension, owners of Quiet Creek, PASA members Claire and Rusty Orner, will demonstrate their experience in transforming

their farm into an educational facility.

For more than four years, the Orner's have offered more than 70 courses year-round to students, peers, tourists, families, and many others. From "Gardening for Flavor: Growing Culinary Herbs" to "Bugs and our Place with them on Earth," all of their courses cover topics relevant to farm business and life.

Most of the materials (herbs, flowers, vines, etc.) used for the workshops come from the farm.

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**Mount Joy Farmers Co-operative Association**

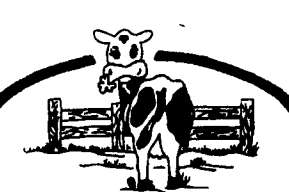
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