

dhia


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Dairyman To Dairyman

GEORGE CUDOC

PA DHIA
Consulting
Dairyman



Question: What can we do to prevent separation of grain and forage in our TMR? If we do nothing will our cows perform, as they should?

Certain feeding situations make this a very good question. A TMR made up of dry hay and grain is the extreme example of two ingredients that are so different in physical nature that maintaining a homogeneous blend of feed is almost impossible without using some sort of binding agent like molasses, liquid fat, wet byproducts like brewers, or even water.

I made a visit to this farm because only experience can determine whether separation of feeds as seen by the dairyman is a

legitimate concern. Before arriving, I had requested that a sample of feed be kept as it was discharged from the mixer. I arrived at the tail end of the feeding period with feed left over from the morning feeding. The amount looked to be adequate and the feeder reported that total leftovers for the day were a bit less than what I saw at the end of the daytime feed period. I advised them that feeding for an 8% refusal was important and that this should be checked periodically with the scales on the wagon so that the eyeball method can be a bit more accurate.

Comparing the mixed feed with the refusal, it was apparent that indeed the cows were sorting. The most accurate way to measure the severity of the separation is to lab analyze both of the samples. Another way to tell if some feed management changes are in order is to look at the performance of the cows since starting this particular diet. Milk pounds have risen steadily since the TMR ration was fed (54 to 58.5). Butterfat percent has remained identical (3.8%), which tells me that rumen health has not been compromised. Percent protein has gone up slightly but still looks normal for Holsteins (3.2 to 3.3%). MUN has gone down to 10 from 13 and indicates that the balance of carbohydrates to protein has increased.

My recommendation in this case is to monitor the above

measurements and if no major change occurs, do not change anything. The cows have told us through DHIA information that although they are sorting and thereby not eating the diet prepared for them; they are able to perform well. The dairyman asked about the addition of water to help keep the feed together and I said that cheap ideas are often the most underestimated. I also suggested that adding liquid molasses would be the most to my liking but he should work with his nutritionists to look at all his options. If molasses were to be added then the other carbohydrate sources should be adjusted because of what we saw already in MUN.

The real concept here is to not just be satisfied with good rations on paper, but more importantly, make sure that you know what your cows are really eating. Let PA DHIA records tell you about your cows and if you cannot hear what they are saying, maybe I can help.

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 — 2.41 bu., 4.31 cwt.
- Wheat, No.2 — 2.32 bu., 3.87 cwt.
- Barley, No.3 — 1.44 bu., 3.08 cwt.
- Oats, No.2 — 1.51 bu., 4.70 cwt.
- Soybeans, No.1 — 4.67 bu., 7.80 cwt.
- Ear Corn — 75.33 ton, 3.77 cwt.
- Alfalfa Hay — 108.75 ton, 5.44 cwt.
- Mixed Hay — 103.75 ton, 5.19 cwt.
- Timothy Hay — 110.00 ton, 5.5 cwt.



FUTURES MARKETS

(Continued from page A16)

cheese followed a similar trend. Despite a 2-3 week delay, this price trend is showing up in the NASS survey prices for cheese. For 40-pound blocks, the NASS survey cheese price rose from \$1.0887 per pound for the week ending May 27 to \$1.1296 for the week ending June 24. This price survey should continue to show price strength for the next few weeks.

The good news about higher cheese prices is that it will increase the monthly average component values for protein, and that will improve milk prices.


The bad news is that USDA found more butter. There was a large adjustment (over 30 percent) in the CME weekly reported warehouse butter stocks, and that lowered butter prices about 10-15 cents per pound. Grade AA butter at the Chicago Mercantile Exchange was trading at \$1.32 per pound on Monday, June 12. In fact, 4 carloads were traded that day. After USDA released the adjusted stocks report, butter fell to a low of \$1.1575 by Friday, June 23. It has since strengthened to \$1 2325 by Friday, June 30.

USDA released class and component prices for June 2000. The Class II price was \$13.08 per cwt, the Class III price was \$9.46 per cwt, and the Class IV price was \$12.38 per cwt. These prices are based on the following component prices: protein \$1.4278 per pound, butterfat \$1.4128 per pound, and other solids \$0.0438 per pound. Dairy farmers that market their milk into federal orders that pay on the basis of components should see these component prices on their upcoming milk checks.

Finally, commercial disappearance of dairy products during the period January - April 2000 totaled 54.1 billion pounds, up 3.8 percent from the same period a year ago. The disappearance of dairy commodities during this same period was as follows: butter up 1.4 percent, American cheese up 4.2 percent, other cheese up 7.6 percent, and nonfat dry milk down 26.7 percent.

For more information on dairy markets, see my website at: <http://www.aers.psu.edu/dairyoutlook/>

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