

dhia

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DHIA Service Center, Orchard Road, University Park, PA 16802

Dairyman to Dairyman

Question: This past spring we made a change to our dry cow program by increasing the concentrate level in the ration. We have better forages now and wonder if this practice should be continued. How can we tell if this change made any difference?

The impact of management decisions and changes are often hard to evaluate. I usually urge the dairymen that I work with to

develop strategies to measure desired results. Without doing so we sit back and are faced with this type of question.

First I believe we should revisit the circumstances at the time of this change. Lower quality forages were available for the dry cows and body condition was lost during the dry cow period as a result. Normal concentrate levels are 1 to 1.5-pounds. This body weight loss

created problems after the cows freshened, as smaller body reserves were available to tap during early lactation. Thin cows became the rule and lower milk yields were evident. Clinical cases of ketosis were rare, but the veterinarian suspected sub-clinical ketosis.

Health records are not readily available, but the herd is on DHIA test. We should look at the early lactation cows for this time frame and then compare to cows in early lactation now.

This frequency graph looks at the 20 freshest cows as of September 1999 and shows the level of production that made up an overall average of 66.5# milk for these cows. I used September figures so that we can compare cows fresh at the same time of year to minimize environmental influence. The following is the result of the September 2000 test. Both graphs look at cows the same age, lactation number, and days in lactation in an effort to compare apples to apples.

We use these pictures to show us the probable impact of a management change. What is significant here is that these similar cows have all benefited by the

change of concentrate in the dry cow ration. The range of production stayed the same but has moved up by 10-pounds. September 1999 range for milk production of fresh cows was 30 to 100 and now that range is 40 to 110. We also note that the average production increased from 66.5 to 80.5, which tells us that the majority of cows have improved more than 10-pounds.

My theory on dry cows is that we need to maintain a certain ability to digest grains as well as maintain body condition. Most situations will need around five-pounds of grain to accomplish this. The cows here have responded well to changes while they were dry. Improved performance during early lactation is evident and I would hesitate to go back to minimal concentrate levels.


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 ingred-

Dairyman To Dairyman

GEORGE CUDOC

PA DHIA
Consulting
Dairyman



Changes are inevitable on dairies. When we make management decisions we should accompany them with a way to measure the impact. DHIA records are the heart and soul of that measuring process. Sometimes we can even enhance normal DHIA records with the use of a computer and software, such as Barn Owl 2000, which I used in the above graphics.

ients as compiled from regional reports across the state of Pennsylvania.

- Corn, No.2y — 1.95 bu., 3.49 cwt.
- Wheat, No.2 — 2.18 bu., 3.64 cwt.
- Barley, No.3 — 1.37 bu., 2.93 cwt.
- Oats, No.2 — 1.30 bu., 4.06 cwt.
- Soybeans, No.1 — 4.19 bu., 6.99 cwt.
- Ear Corn — 57.33 ton, 2.87 cwt.
- Alfalfa Hay — 131.25 ton, 6.56 cwt.
- Mixed Hay — 130.00 ton, 6.5 cwt.
- Timothy Hay — 111.25 ton, 5.56 cwt.


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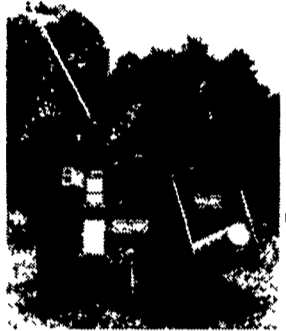
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Model	Max Capacity	HP Range
CH 140	4 1/2" diam.	17-40
CH 150	6" diam.	20-50
CH 250	10" diam.	40+


Sawmill chipper with pulley
CH 250 OEM 18" wide slabs
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CH 140HMD	6" diam.	Min. 23 gpm@ 2000 psi oil flow
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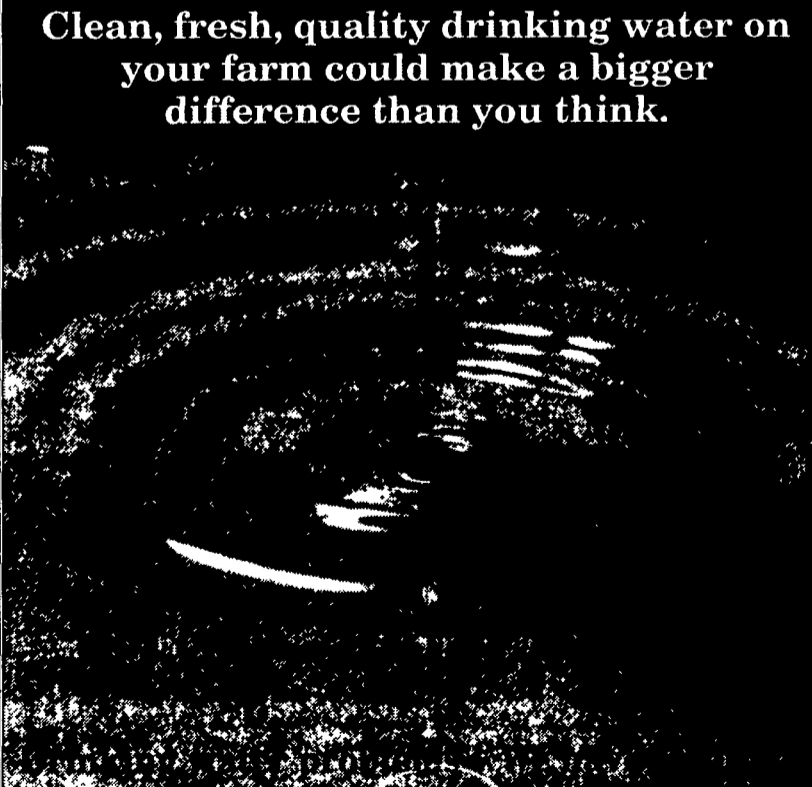

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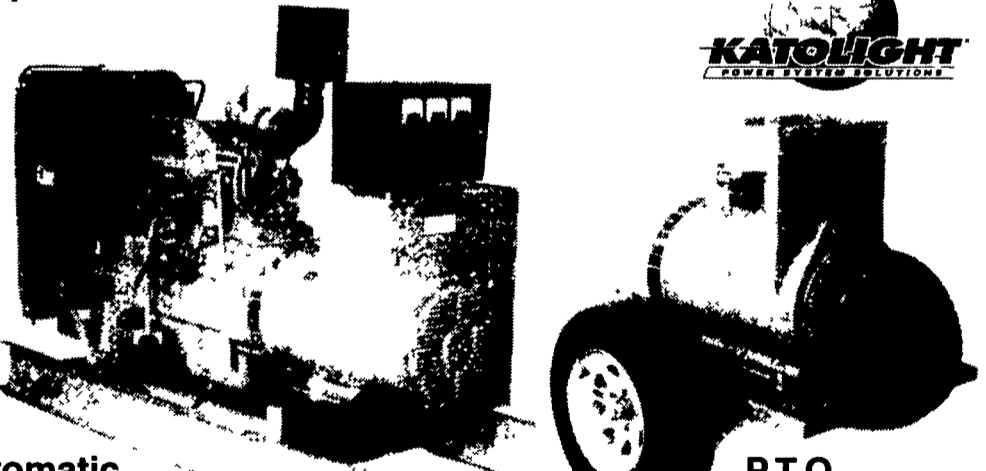
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