

**Dairyman To Dairyman**

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Question: We started to test for MUN two months ago and are wondering what should MUN values be for our herd?

By now, almost everyone has heard or read that average MUN values should fall between 10 and 14. This is the range where we see the highest and most consistent production on all the cows

recorded in the PA DHIA test database; the range where all "individual" cows use dietary protein most efficiently. However, when we look at the "herd" overall, we should consider some other factors.

Recently, I visited a herd that serves as a good example of how a factor can help determine where to set the goal for MUN within the acceptable range. We will start out by observing that this is a single ration TMR. This factor presents a challenge as we try to determine protein-feeding efficiency through MUN testing. We see these numbers in this herd.

Lactation 1

0-40 days  
avg. MUN = 7.4  
41-99 days  
avg. MUN = 8.9  
100-199 days  
avg. MUN = 11.3  
200-299 days  
avg. MUN = 12.7  
Avg./total  
11.8

These numbers represent a common trend in herds that use a single fed TMR. This type of feeding strategy calls for a little different evaluation of the MUN numbers. The low numbers in the early lactation cows indicate that there is a lack of dietary protein, especially rumen available.

This is easy to fix, but you

need to realize that the trend is established for this herd and fixing the protein for early lactation will also cause the tail enders to become somewhat inefficient in protein utilization.

My recommendation is to look at the profile of the herd first. In this herd, we used the first lactation group to set parameters because 52 percent of the herd are first lactation. Furthermore, the distribution of milking 2-year-olds was even through days in milk.

This feeding strategy is growing among herds and when we give all the cows the same opportunity for feed consumption, we must address where we generate

the most profit potential This would occur during the early part of lactation.

We contacted this herd's nutritionist and fixed the diet to optimize production potential while still maintaining rumen health. We did so by changing to less use of bypass protein and more use of soluble protein.

We now anticipate that the MUN numbers should rise throughout the lactation and the average needs to be 13 to 14. This change will address the highest profit potential animals with some slight protein waste in late lactation. We even got bonus points — reduced cost to the dairyman.

## Pa. Growers Sought For 2001 Farmers' Markets

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — State Agriculture Secretary Sam Hayes today encouraged Pennsylvania's growers to participate in the 2001 Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP).

"Farmers markets are a great tradition of Pennsylvania Agriculture," Hayes said. "The Farmers Market Nutrition Program provides the opportunity for low-income Pennsylvanians to purchase fresh, nutritious Pennsylvania produce."

The Farmers Market Nutrition Program provides checks to eligible recipients to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables from approved growers. The dates of the program will be June 1-Nov. 30.

For a farmer to participate in the Farmers Market Nutrition Program, the farmer must own or lease farmland within the commonwealth on which they produce and sell more than \$1,000 of agricultural products. In addition, more than 50 per-

cent of the retail value of produce sold by the farmer under the FMNP must be grown in Pennsylvania or purchased from another Pennsylvania farmer.

The Bureau of Food Distribution is sending out notices to all farmers who participated in the 2000 Farmers Market Nutrition Program. If a farmer is interested in receiving information about the FMNP, contact the Bureau of Food Distribution at (800) 468-2433 or (717) 787-2940.

The Agriculture Department's Bureau of Food Distribution remains strong in its commitment to fight hunger through the administration of several different programs.

In 2000, Farmers Market Nutrition Program received \$1.5 million in state funds and \$1.9 million in federal funds. More than 400 farmers participated last year in the Farmers Market Nutrition Program.

The State Food Purchase Program, one of the largest in the

U.S., provides cash grants to counties to purchase food for distribution to those in need. In the 2000-2001 year, there is \$16 million committed to the effort. In

addition, The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) provided \$8 million of USDA commodity to those in need in Pennsylvania.

In the last two years, \$5 million was made available to counties to strengthen emergency food-assistance networks across the commonwealth.

## Understanding Dairy Markets, Pricing Meetings To Be Conducted

LEESPORT (Berks Co.) — Penn State Cooperative Extension in southeast Pennsylvania will conduct four meetings on the topics, "Understanding Dairy Markets and Pricing":

### Berks County

• Session #1: Date: Tuesday, Feb. 13. Time: 10:30 a.m. — 2 p.m. Place: Berks County Ag Center. Cost: \$2 for lunch, payable at the door. Registration: Call Clyde Myers at (610) 378-1327 by Feb. 9.

• Session #2: Date: Tuesday,

Feb. 13. Time: 7:30 p.m. Place: Kutztown High School — Agriculture Classroom. Registration: Not required. Directions: Contact Jon Stutzman at (610) 682-4138.

### Montgomery County

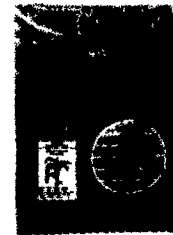
• Date: Wednesday, Feb. 14. Time: 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. Place: Montgomery County 4-H Center. Cost: None. Lunch is free if pre-registered. Registration: Required for lunch. Call Montgomery County Cooperative Extension at (610) 489-4315 by

Feb. 9. For information, contact John Berry, Lehigh County Cooperative Extension, at (610) 391-9840.

### Chester County

• Date: Thursday, Feb. 15. Time: 10:30 a.m. - 2 p.m. Place: Russellville Grange, Russellville (near the intersection of Rt. 10 and Rt. 896). Cost: None. Lunch is free if pre-registered. Registration: Contact Steve Dietrich, Chester County Cooperative Extension, by Feb. 13, at (610) 696-3500.

Tru



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