

Dairy Day Draws 450

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cow's environment should also include adequate space for that cow to receive much needed nutrition. His talk focused mainly on controlling postpartum disorders through sound nutritional practices, especially in the dry period.

"It's the dry period that sets this whole system up," said Van Saun. "Colostrum quality and quantity is influenced by the diet of the dry cow. Viability of that calf is impacted by the dry cow diet. How much milk the cow makes for you and what the composition of that cow's milk is dependent on the dry cow diet. Fertility of that cow is impacted by what happens to that cow two months prior to her even calving. Periparturient diseases, like milk fever and ketosis, are also influenced by her diet as a dry cow. We really need to think of this late gestation period, not as a rest period, but as a critical preparation period."

Van Saun showed that the amount of nutrients required to support a cow in late pregnancy compared to the amount of nutrients required to support a milking cow increases very quickly.

"These cows went from being dry and pregnant to making 65 pounds of milk at four percent fat within seven days postpartum," he said.

This translates to a tripling of her glucose output, doubling her amino acid output, and a seven-fold increase in her fatty acid output. If she can't make this change, she ends up with some variation of metabolic disease.

Van Saun noted that peripar-

turient diseases not only cause extra management concerns, but also cost the farmer in real and opportunity costs. An estimated cost of milk fever per incidence is \$334. There are also uncalculated amounts of money lost in cows with subclinical signs of disease.

"We recognize the clinical down cow, we recognize the cow that we've got to have surgery done on, but the biggest problem we have with these diseases is what we call subclinical disease — the marginal cow, the cow that just doesn't take off very well, the cow that doesn't get to peak fill."

He outlined five critical control points that need to be dealt with, including maximizing dry matter intake, stimulation of rumen papillae, minimizing negative energy balance and protein balance, maintaining calcium homeostasis, and minimizing immune system dysfunction.

"Improving nutrition during transition can help the girls fight off problems," said Van Saun. He stated you need to balance the rations for what the cow is eating, monitor forage quality, and separate feeding groups. He also suggests that environmental stressors should be minimized and regular body condition scoring should be done.

"You never know where you can go if you don't know where you started," he said.

Afternoon sessions included programs on corn weed control by Bradford County Agronomy Agent Mark Madden, a Johne's Disease question and answer session conducted by Van Saun and Jayarao, and a program on the costs of raising heifers and

USDA Announces Pork Checkoff Program To Continue

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Recently, the USDA announced a settlement with the National Pork Producers Council (NPPC) and the Michigan Pork Producer Association that will continue the Pork Checkoff Program. Under the settlement, certain program restructuring is required.

The changes, effective immediately, will ensure the separation of the National Pork Board and the NPPC and make the program more responsive to concerns of pork producers.

contract raising of dairy heifers presented by Dr. Peter Tozer of Penn State University.

Tozer highlighted the cost of raising replacements and gave examples of various methods of contract heifer raising. One arrangement is when the producer relinquishes control of the animal to someone else, who agrees to raise it to maturity. The other arrangement is when the heifers are sold to a person who agrees to raise them giving the seller the first rights to purchase the animal back at maturity.

Regardless of which method is used, Tozer cautioned that all the details should be spelled out in the contract from performance standards to obligations of each party, including breeding decisions and health management.

More information on each dairy day presentation is available through local cooperative extension services.

The restructuring requires the National Pork Board to:

- Employ its own management and staff, including the chief executive officer and chief financial officer.

- Manage separate contracts for promotion, research, and consumer information projects.

- Maintain separate office operations from the NPPC.

- Maintain separate communications from the NPPC.

Under the agreement, state pork producer associations will continue to operate independently and be accountable for checkoff funds but may cooperate on projects and communications with state affiliate organizations of the National Pork Producers Council.

The Pork Board will have approximately two years to demonstrate to producers and importers the value of the checkoff program to the industry. USDA will conduct a survey by June 2003 to determine whether 15 percent of producers and importers are in favor of conducting a referendum to decide continuation of the checkoff program. If the required number of producers and importers request a referendum, the referendum would then be held within one year.

Additional information about the settlement and related issues is available at: (<http://www.ams.usda.gov/lsg/mpb/pork.htm>).

Chester County Holstein Tour

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Emory. This herd has four Ex. cows and has several high index cows which result in a lot of contracts already filled and more to fill.

For reservations, call by

March 10: Bob Hewitt (610) 495-7927, Glenn Ranck (610) 998-0672, or Dick Hostetter (610) 857-2780. When calling for reservations, please mention where you would like to meet the bus.

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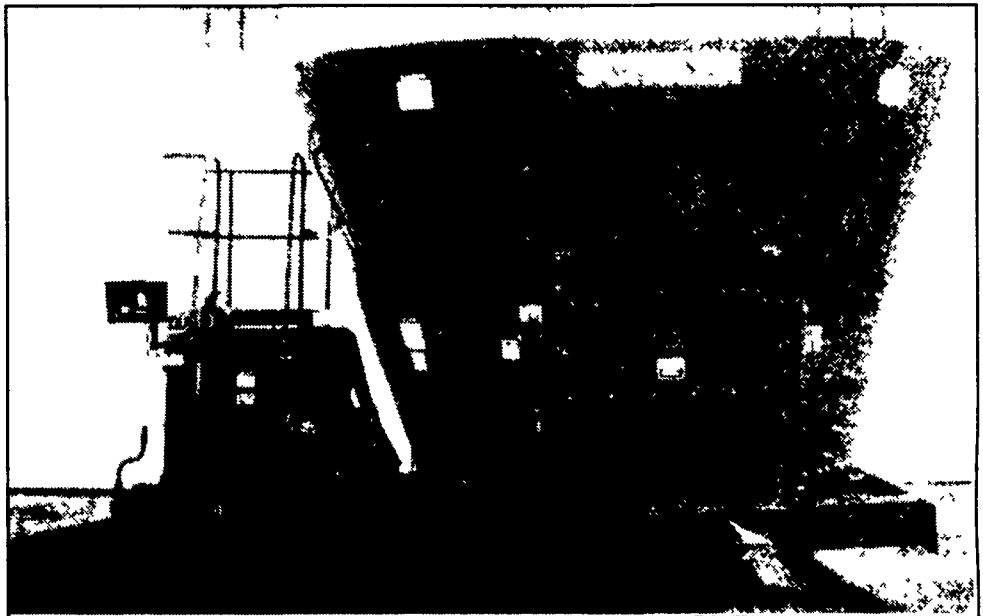
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