AccuWeather® 7-Day Forecast for Lancaster and Surrounding Areas

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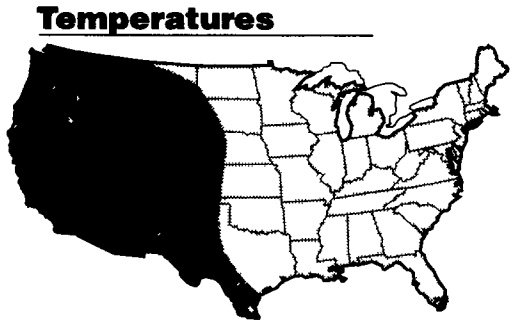
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Partly sunny and cold with a flurry or two possible	Cold with sun and some clouds	Mostly cloudy, cold with a chance of snow	Becoming mostly sunny, blustery and cold	Mostly cloudy with a chance of snow	Clouds and sun, chance for a flurry, cold	Mostly sunny and very cold
High 28, Low 6	High 30, Low 16	High 28, Low 16	High 26, Low 10	High 36, Low 26	High 28, Low 14	High 22, Low 8
UV 2	UV 2	UV 1	UV 2	UV 1	UV 2	UV 2

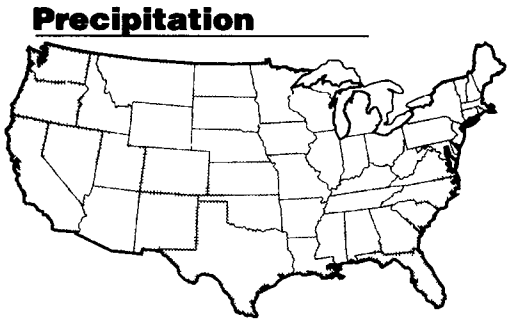
The local 7-Day Forecast is for Lancaster County The ultraviolet index is a guide to exposure to the sun The higher the UV Index number, the greater the need for eye and skin protection 0-2, minimal, 3-4, low, 5-6, moderate, 7-9, high, 10 or above, very high

The Week Ahead

Temperatures



Precipitation



Above Normal

Near Normal

Below Normal

Above Normal

Near Normal

Below Normal

Almanac

For the week ending Wednesday, Jan 8

Temperature

High	35
Low	27
Normal high for week ahead	37
Normal low for week ahead	21

Precipitation

Total last week	0.70"
Month to date	1.41"
Normal month to date	1.00"
Year to date	1.41"
Last year to date	0.61"
Normal year to date	1.00"

Growing Degree Days

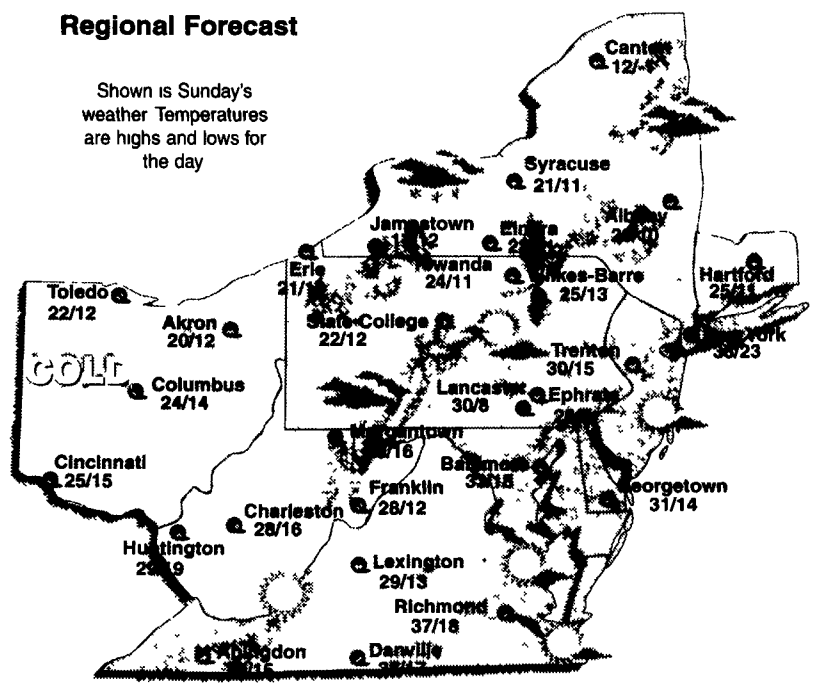
Month to date	0
Season to date	3554

Farming Forecast

Arctic air in place over the weekend will retreat early this week. Mainly dry Sunday and most of Monday An upper-level system could bring snow or flurries to the area late Monday night into Tuesday High pressure brings dry weather on Wednesday Another cold front will bring the chance for some snow, or a mix on Thursday Behind this system, another shot of very cold air will press south

Regional Forecast

Shown is Sunday's weather Temperatures are highs and lows for the day



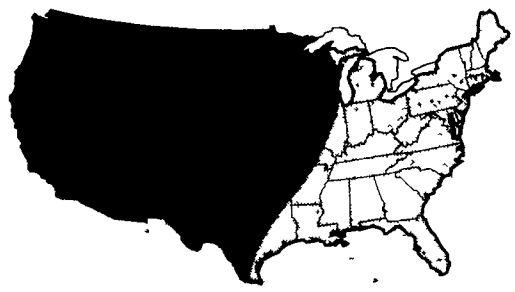
Last Week's Precipitation

Lancaster

January 02	0.08"
January 03	0.33"
January 04	0.00"
January 05	0.19"
January 06	0.10"
January 07	trace
January 08	0.00"

All forecasts and maps provided by AccuWeather, Inc ©2003

30-Day Temperature Outlook

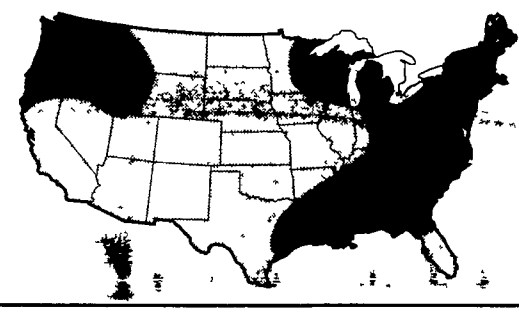


Above Normal

Near Normal

Below Normal

30-Day Precipitation Outlook



Above Normal

Near Normal

Below Normal

Franklin County Dairy Day Focuses On Dry Cow Program

DAVE LEFEVER
Lancaster Farming Staff

KAUFFMAN (Franklin Co.) — Balanced dry cow nutrition is an important part of making sure the animals get a good milking start.

But feed is only part of the picture — a smaller part than is often believed, according to Gabriella Varga of Penn's State's dairy and animal science department. She spoke on the topic of dry cow management at the annual Franklin County Dairy Day at Kauffman Jan. 3.

"We are quick to blame nutrition (for early-lactation problems)," she said. "But there are many other things involved."

According to Varga, proper transition feeding amounts to about 25 percent of the challenge of getting cows off to a healthy, productive lacatation. Overall management, such as cow comfort, can play an even bigger role — about 50 percent, with the animals' genetic makeup rounding out the equation at about 25 percent.

Ketosis, displaced abomasum, retained placenta, milk fever, and metritis are some of the problems that a good transition program helps to prevent. These ailments can have a big impact on veterinary bills — and the milk check.

"When a cow gets sick, she eats about 5 pounds less feed per and makes about 20 pounds less milk per day," Varga said.

Varga divided transition cow management into four phases: prior to dryoff, far-off dry period, close-up dry period, and post-fresh period.

Dairy managers should begin monitoring cows for body condition in the six-week period prior to drying off, Vargas said. Health risks to over-fat cows have been known for many decades, she pointed out. Cows that grow too fat as they drop off in production and enter the dry period can be at a greater risk for metabolic problems after calving. During the dry period, producers may benefit by feeding fat cows separately from those with lower body condition scores.

Providing plenty of space is crucial for good dry cow management, Varga said. She noted that many producers tend to focus on milking facilities at the expense of the dry cows.

"Build your dry cow stallbarn first," she said. "You got to make these girls comfortable. You do not want to overcrowd them."

Is it necessary to provide a "far-off" dry cow ration, and then switch to another, more nutritious "close-up" ration in the month before calving? Or is it best to keep the dry cows in one group?

"There are advantages and disadvantages for both," Varga said. It always depends on the availability of factors such as labor, facilities, and forage.

Among the advantages of splitting dry cows into two groups is that the far-off group can be fed cheaper rations that require less time to feed — such as free-choice hay in round bales. Also, if better quality forage is in limited supply, it should be saved for the close-up group.

On the other hand, having just one dry cow group eliminates splitting up and moving cows and can simplify the work of feeding. And, when the dry cows are all fed a relatively good ration throughout the period, managers can be more assured that the cows will adapt to milking rations after calving.

Gabriella Varga, Penn State dairy and animal science department, suggests that overall management and cow comfort are even bigger factors than nutrition in a good dry cow program.

If the cows are kept in one group, however, they may need to be monitored more closely to make sure "bully cows" are not crowding out less aggressive animals.

Varga said that producers may want to consider increasing protein and energy amounts above currently recommended levels for close-up rations. This could help meet the needs of the fetus and acclimate the cow's digestive system to production after calving. However, boosting protein and energy levels should be done with caution.

"Why not just feed 16 percent crude protein? Protein is a gross measure — the type is important," she said. Feeding too much unusable protein will just result in it passing through the animal, or can even cause ammonia toxicity.

Dry cows tend to decrease their dry matter intake as they approach calving. Adding more energy to the close-up ration helps boost dry matter intake and increases insulin production, which assists fatty acid metabolism, Varga said. While many studies have shown this, they have been inconclusive about how adding more energy to close-up rations affects production.

"The bottom line," she said, "is the majority of these studies didn't see any response in milk production."

Varga added that the studies have not yet supplied enough information on factors such as the possible affect on metabolic disorders. Research is still in progress.

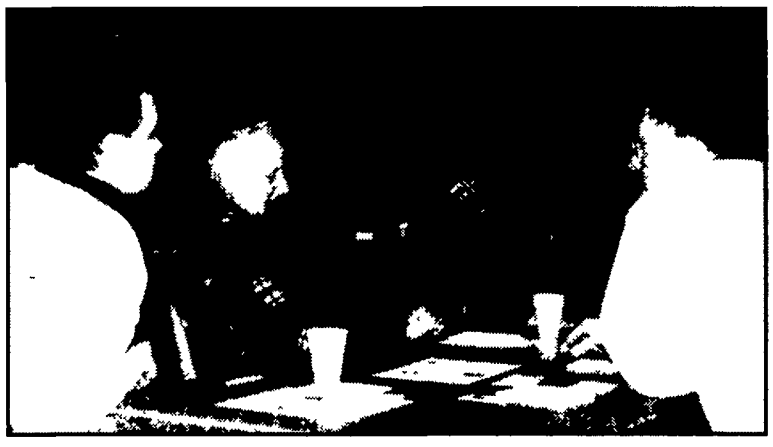
Above all, Vargas said, dairy managers need to provide dry cows with good, balanced rations and make sure the cows are comfortable.

"You can feed a whole gamut of dry cow rations and the animals will do fine," she said.

Also speaking at the Dairy Day were Ken Bailey, Penn State dairy economist, and Richard Stup of Penn State's Dairy Alliance.

Bailey outlined the futures market and the principles of forward contracting. Stup led a discussion on the importance of good communication within dairy family businesses.

More reports from the Frankin County Dairy Day are scheduled for the Feb. 15 issue of *Lancaster Farming's Dairy Plus.*



Franklin County dairymen, from left, Dale Martin, Harold Crider, and Jay Grove share their experiences as members of family-operated farms. The discussion was initiated by Richard Stup of Penn State's Dairy Alliance. He spoke about the need for family farm members to practice good communication skills.