

Dairy Directions

WINTER 2008 NEWSLETTER

TENNESSEE FARMERS COOPERATIVE
180 OLD NASHVILLE HWY. LAVERGNE, TN 37086

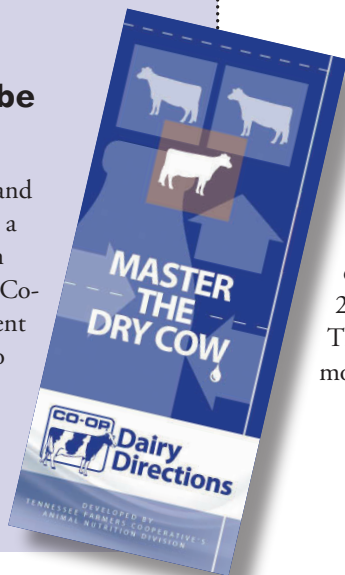
How are your calves feeling today?

Traditional calf feeding programs do not meet the baby calf's basic energy requirements during cold stress conditions.

- Prevent the negative impact of cold stress on your calves' growth and health by feeding the right amount and balance of nutrients (protein + energy).
- Feeding more fat (energy boosters) does not deliver the right balance of nutrients.
- To assure your calves' energy requirements are being met, feed more volume of milk replaced with the right protein-to-energy balance.
- Protect the weight gain momentum through feeding performance starters.

How can you be successful?

Dry cow nutrition and management can have a tremendous impact on milk production. The Co-op dry cow management program is designed to help you be successful in this critical area of herd care. See the enclosed brochure for details.



Dairy Directions is published by Tennessee Farmers Cooperative to further the goal of helping you maintain a successful operation. Information is compiled by the Co-op's nutritionists, staff veterinarian, and feed and animal health specialists. This newsletter is just one component of our comprehensive Dairy Directions program, which offers all the products, services, and advice dairy producers need to improve milk quantity and quality as well as profitability.

A better balance

Adding the right protein supplements to increase production

When it comes to protein requirements for lactating dairy cows, researchers continually reach the same conclusion: Feeding highly digestible protein sources produces greater efficiency, which results in higher milk production and profit.

The latest research indicates the best results come from breaking protein into more simplistic forms, such as amino acids. This is a difficult process because dairy cattle have always relied on their great ability to convert relatively low-quality protein sources into valuable milk and milk products. The National Research Council (NRC, 2001) now suggests lactation requirements for specific amino acids, namely lysine and methionine.

Customizing for Tennessee

A few months ago, Co-op Feed and Animal Health specialists began balancing select rations based on specific supplementation of amino acids. They relied on research from Cooperative Research Farms, which identifies specific production parameters that are crucial to supplementing nutrients needed for producing and maintaining outstanding milk and milk fat production.

To customize diet adjustments needed in Tennessee, Co-op nutritionists first examined nutrient profiles of typical feedstuffs available within the state. When evaluating the amino acid content of milk, lean muscle tissue, bacterially synthesized crude protein, and common feeds, it became clear that the amino acid content of most feeds used in the state is probably too low in lysine and methionine to meet the requirements for milk production and/or lean tissue growth.

Bacterially synthesized crude protein, unique to all ruminant animals, is a rich source of amino acids. It is, perhaps, the most complete source of amino acids for meeting the needs of the dairy cow for milk production and growth. However, it is not feasible for the high-producing dairy cow to synthesize sufficient amounts of protein to satisfy these requirements for milk production and/or maintenance of body tissue. To meet these requirements, additional amino acid must be included in rations.

FAST FACT

Feeding highly digestible protein sources produces greater efficiency, resulting in higher milk production and profit.

Achieving excellent results

Lactating cows being fed the amino acid-enhanced diets now being recommended by Co-op specialists are producing excellent responses in milk production and milk components.

By consistently applying the latest research, Co-op specialists are creating better ration balances to meet the goal of maximizing the digestive capability of lactating dairy cattle. In the case of protein supplementation, requirements are now more adequately predicted that 1) reduce excessive quantities of expensive protein sources and 2) reduce any excess nutrient waste while promoting increases in milk yield. Your local TFC Feed and Animal Health Specialist has been trained to evaluate and provide the most up-to-date rations to meet these goals. Please contact him to set up a farm visit.

Learn More: www.ourcoop.com

Replace forages with Totalac

Four years of dry growing conditions are resulting in a shortage of homegrown quality forage on many dairy farms. Not to mention the cost of planting corn is out the roof and getting Western hay delivered comes with sticker shock, too. So what's a dairy producer to do? Look to your Co-op for a better alternative.

Co-op's Totalac feeds can replace up to half of your herd's forage requirements. These feeds exceed most conventional dairy rations in performance, save labor, and allow more cows to be milked with a limited forage supply.

Increasing intake and production

Totalac feeds replace forage while also meeting cows' nutritional needs for high milk production. Cooperative Research Farms trials reveal that cows offered Totalac rations have significantly greater dry matter intake as compared to conventional diets, resulting in greater milk yield. Intake is increased due to greater digestibility of fiber that is formulated in Totalac diets versus fiber found in traditional forage.

Most typical rations have dry matter intake ratios of 50 percent forage and 50 percent feed. Totalac diets range from 65 to 80 percent dry matter from feed, replacing up to half of the forage requirements.

Solving a problem

Totalac and Enhancer dairy feeds were born several years ago out of necessity, but quickly grew into a preferred feeding program for many dairies. In the late 1980s, a Coffee County dairy producer found himself in a bind for forage. He had good cows and facilities, but due to circumstances beyond his control he was unable to grow the forage needed. He had nothing but fescue hay to feed. A Co-op nutritionist



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developed a high fiber feed (#281) with a surprising recommended feeding rate of 40 pounds per cow. The results were equally surprising. In short order, the producer's herd production jumped from about 40 pounds to an average 65 pounds per cow daily — all while maintaining sound herd health.

Check it out

If you have a limited forage supply, want to expand your operation on limited land, or simply want to make your forage last twice as long, consider Totalac. Your Co-op offers a full line of Totalac feeds to match with any forage program.

Contact your Feed and Animal Health specialist, Livestock specialist, or your local Co-op store for more information on how Totalac can improve your bottom line.

Vaccines now more flexible

Dairy cows are under a lot of stress. We place physiological and physical demands on them that are unparalleled in other types of animal production. As a result, it's critically important to protect and nurture their immune systems.

Stress decreases immune system function, so it's very important for the dairy cow's immune system to be at its very best at all times. Administering a well-designed vaccination protocol is one way to assure your herd's immune systems are functioning well.

Providing exceptional immunity

In recent years, we have learned that modified live vaccines provide exceptional immunity to the diseases we try to prevent; however, they have been a challenge to administer in dairy herds because of use restrictions. Fortunately, the generation of modified live vaccines now available for dairy cows allows more flexibility and safety.

Dairy producers often try to breed many cows in the fall, applying aggressive heat synchronization protocols to maximize the number of cows getting pregnant. These same dairy farmers may also try to

administer vaccinations and handle other types of maintenance during the synchronization period. In the past, this practice hasn't been compatible with most modified live vaccines.

A majority of modified live vaccines require administering 30 days prior to the initiation of a heat synchronization program. Using these products during the heat synchronization period may lower pregnancy rates.

Vaccinating pregnant cattle

Fortunately, modified live vaccines have progressed significantly in the past few years. Some are now labeled for use (under strict guidelines) in pregnant cattle. Specifically labeled vaccines must first be administered to open cattle and boosted as recommended, then they can be given to those same animals while they are pregnant in future years. These latter-day modified live vaccines give dairy producers greater flexibility, allowing use at many different times with less risk while still avoiding the heat synchronization period.

For more information about how you can use modified live vaccines to enhance herd health, contact your Co-op Feed and Animal Health specialist.

Have a question? Need a solution? Contact your local TFC Pro-Ag Feed/Animal Health Specialist

EAST

Denny Sells
615-289-3554
dsells@ourcoop.com

NORTHERN MIDDLE

Jacob Sparkman
931-212-3999
jsparkman@ourcoop.com

SOUTHERN MIDDLE

Rick Syler
615-542-1266
rsyler@ourcoop.com

WEST

Jason Moore
901-481-4364
jmoore@ourcoop.com