

DAIRYINFO

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ADDRESSING FALL PRODUCTION 'SLUMP'

While many dairymen expect production to increase quickly as weather cools off from summer heat, fall is typically a challenging time to make milk. Feed changes, particularly new crop corn silage and high moisture (HM) corn grain, can result in lower production. Some years the production loss is minor, but if [you] are experiencing a 'slump' the following items may be factors, and **suggestions** to counteract these situation are provided below. Production typically increases in winter. Make plans now, while you are thinking about it to implement changes that will reduce the fall 'slump' next year and in the future.

1. Starch in corn is encapsulated in a zein protein coating, which protects the seed from breakdown so it can "overwinter" and sprout in the spring. Until corn grain or silage has been exposed to enzymatic breakdown for several months of ensiling, it will be slowly digested, providing less energy and fermentable starch to generate rumen microbial protein. **Increase carryover of previous year's fermented feeds for 3-4 months to allow the new silage to ferment more completely. Include more fermentable carbohydrate sources (NDF, soluble fiber, starch, and/or sugar) in rations until ensiling progresses. Add sources of undegradable protein to make up for less microbial growth. Realize you may not be able to completely compensate. Test new silage for starch/fiber amounts and rates of fermentation before feeding.** Corn and silage digestibility may be the most common and widespread cause of a fall 'slump'.

2. Some dairies have just enough of last year's silage until they reach new crop silage; however, they have had to feed "spoiled" feed at the end of a silo to make it last or may not have removed all the "spoiled" feed when opening the new silo. **Reduce or dilute "spoiled" feed and include palatable hay, buffers and additives to aid symptoms of gut upsets.**

3. Some dairies feed unfermented "silage" immediately, which is heating due to the active fermentation process and/or yeast growth. Green chop corn (which is high in sugars) may have had to be fed until new crop silage is really ready. **Reduce or dilute amounts of green chop silage and include palatable hay, buffers and additives to aid symptoms of gut health upsets.** New crop silage or HM corn has less soluble protein until it has been ensiled for a period of time, and protein is broken down and becomes more available. **Add more degradable protein until soluble protein increases in silage.**

4. Days are shorter. Production will be 4-6 lbs/cow/day higher when lactating cows are provided with 16 hrs of 15-20 foot candles (minimum) of light per day. **Adding supplemental lighting can help to increase fall and winter production.** Dry cows will produce 4-6 lbs/cow/day more milk next lactation when limited to 8 hrs of light. Those calving in August/September had long day light

light when dry. **If possible limit light for dry cows.**

5. Cows calving in late August/September, possibly heat stressed during the dry period, may calve under heat stress, eat less and potentially peak lower in October/November. Cows that calved earlier in the spring/summer have been subjected to heat stress during early lactation, which likely reduced their peak milk production. Those cows are now in mid-to-late lactation, and producing even less milk than we desire because of lower peaks. **Provide heat abatement (water and fans) for lactating and dry/prefresh cows.** Fresh cows may have less body condition reserves for peak milk if thinner from eating less in summer. **Formulate dry cow diets to maintain dry matter intake and make high levels of dry matter intake in fresh cows a top priority.**

6. Hot weather and uncomfortable stalls can affect foot health with more foot problems often reported in fall. Cows with sore feet eat less and produce less until corrected. **Provide heat abatement and comfortable stalls, trim and treat feet as needed.**

7. Cows may not have conceived in hot weather last year, days in milk may be longer, production will normally decline by 8% per month beyond peak. **Compare 150-day milk, which corrects for advanced DIM. Consider a timed AI program or fall breeding catch-up "blitz"; beware of overcrowding dry cow facilities next summer.**

8. Cows with longer days open may become over-conditioned. Cows dry in August/September may be under heat stress, eat less, and (especially if over-conditioned) have more challenges when calving in October/November. **Provide adequate energy. Control excess weight gain.**

9. More heifers may have been bred to calve in fall to help cash flow, if cows didn't get bred. Total production may be alright, but you may have to **accept lower production per cow with 2 yr olds.**

10. Some dairies increase calving in fall to reduce summer calving stress. If crowding increases in dry/close-up facilities, stress hormones increase resulting in lower immunity, health issues, and poorer start-ups. **Provide extra feedbunk and bedding space for pre-fresh cows. Reduce pen move frequency.**

(Edited from an article by Dr. Tim Snyder, Renaissance Nutrition, Inc.)

ORDER SEED FOR 2012... SOON! CONTACT ME FOR INFORMATION

Interested in discussing topics in this newsletter, or want to do a better job feeding and managing your cows? Call me! From calves to heifers, dry and lactating cows, my goal is to help you.

That's Renaissance's commitment!

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THE TEAM FOR RESULTS**

Winter is Coming!

The cold and damp of winter is inevitable! It is just a question of when it begins and ends, and the severity that may come with it. Change in temperature can be very difficult for livestock. This is especially true for calves, which often suffer from the damp and cold of a typical winter. Helping to maintain body heat is critical during the first few weeks of life. Using a quality-made Renaissance calf blanket can help make a difference that can impact their growth and development! We offer a larger size for Holstein calves (royal blue); a smaller-fitting blanket for Jersey calves (black); and our new-style **START N' GROW™** blanket (navy blue), designed to give added warmth to newborn calves (Holstein). This is designed to remove the inner blanket as calves approach 3-4 weeks of age. Warm up your calves this winter for a quality difference today... and tomorrow!

Avoid "post-weaning slump" with proper nutrition/management
Transitioning calves from milk replacer to dry feed can be as crucial as the transition from a close-up dry cow to a lactating cow. Emphasis on nutrition and management during weaning can help avoid loss of body condition or increased incidence of disease. The importance of proper feeding practices and attention to management can result in a much healthier calf that has potential to increase a dairy's profitability once in the milking herd. A top goal of any weaning program should be to raise a healthy calf. Proper nutrition and management practices will allow a calf to reach its genetic growth potential and enter the milking herd at the proper size and age to reach peak lactation performance. Allowing the rumen to develop to a point where it is capable of efficiently digesting calf starter is important to successful weaning. Calves weaned before the rumen is efficiently fermenting dry feed can be expected to go through a "post-weaning slump," often recognized by loss of body condition, poor hair coats and increased incidence of respiratory disease. To prevent this from occurring:

- **Feed milk or milk replacer at 15-20% of a calf's body weight**
- **Use a high-protein, high-quality calf starter**
- **Calves should be weaned on dry matter intake, not age**

(Edited from an article by DCHA, Dr. Robert Corbett, and Arm & Hammer Animal Nutrition)



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October 2011...

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CHECK IT OUT!

