

DAIRY PIPELINE

Volume 29, No. 2 March 2008

Department of Dairy Science
Blacksburg, VA 24061
540/231-4762 Fax: 540/231-5014
www.vtdairy.dasc.vt.edu



WHOLE HERD DRY MATTER INTAKE SHOULD BE MONITORED

Do you know how much your cows are eating? If you say yes because the nutritionist has a printout with the number on it, you may not know.

Actual on-farm monitoring is needed to determine if the projected is close to what is being consumed. To do this the total amount of feed offered minus the refusal needs to be measured. Next, the dry matter content of the total mixed ration needs to be determined.

Dry matter can be determined by sending a sample of the feed to a lab or, better yet, by on-farm determination. Koster testers work well and the dry matter of wet feeds can be determined in only a matter of minutes. This tester works by drying the sample and then using the sample weight before and after drying. To assist with the weights, a scale is included with the tester.

Weekly dry matter determination is recommended, but dry matter should also be checked any time feeds change. We project dry matter consumption on our Phosphorus Feeding Incentive Program from the NRC 2001. This dry matter intake prediction (listed below) is based on milk production and body weight and accounts for having a

certain proportion first lactation cows in the herd.

Compare your dry matter intakes on a whole herd or group basis to the numbers below. If your numbers are lower ask why. Reasons can include: a higher number of first lactation animals than was predicted here, inadequate amounts of feed delivered, moldy feed, excessively wet or dry feeds, high fiber rations, or imbalanced rations. Monitoring your herds dry matter consumption can also alert you to unexpected changes that occur that need to be addressed.

“Weekly dry matter determination is recommended, but dry matter should also be checked any time feeds change.”

—Charlie Stallings

Extension Dairy Scientist, Nutrition & Forage Quality
(540) 231-3066
cstallin@vt.edu

Milk, lbs./cow/day	30	40	50	60	70	80	90
Dry matter intake, lbs./day							
900 lbs. body weight	31	35	39	43	47	51	55
1400 lbs. body weight	37	40	43	47	50	54	57

DHI OFFERS NEW REPORTS TO CHECK ID ON COWS AND HEIFERS

Dairy producers on DHI test now have access to two new reports to locate identification problems in cows and heifers. The reports are DHI-570 “Heifer calf ID check list” and DHI 575 “Cow ID check list”. There is no charge for the reports, and they can be

run on request, at each test day. Printed copies of the reports will be mailed to the farm.

The idea is to use the reports to find problems and to correct those records if accurate information is available. Please don’t guess

(Continued on page 2)

Upcoming Activities

2nd Annual SWVA Innovation in Dairy Trip—March 25-26th contact Chase Scott at (276) 223-6040 for details.

If you are a person with a disability and require any auxiliary aids, services or other accommodations for any Extension event, please discuss your accommodation needs with the Extension staff at your local Extension office at least 1 week prior to the event.

at sire or dam ID. No ID is better than wrong ID.

After the initial corrections, a periodic check about once a year should be sufficient. New ID problems would be most likely in heifers. One of the major reasons DRMS Raleigh developed these reports is because of ID problems with sires of the European dairy breeds such as Montebéliarde and Swedish Reds. If your herd includes some of these animals, odds are that ID is incorrect, particularly if you followed procedures that I relayed to you just a few months ago!

Service sires from the European dairy breeds should be recorded using two character breed codes such as SR for Swedish Red. The most reliable way to enter the sire ID is to use registration number, as there may still be problems with the various NAAB sire

“Accurate and complete ID’s are essential if we are to track performance of these breeds under our management conditions.”

codes on the European dairy breeds. For instance, the sire ID for the SR bull Peterslund is SWE*91213. Our first SR-cross to calve is identified successfully with this code. She received her first USDA cow PTA’s in the January 2008 run.

Ask the DHI field service technician for lists of sire ID’s on European dairy breeds or contact me for a copy. I encourage you to use these new reports, especially if you have used any of the European dairy breeds. The genetic evaluations you will receive (through PCDART) are useful for within herd management decisions. Accurate and complete ID’s are essential if we are to track performance of these breeds under our management conditions.

—Bennet Cassell
Extension Dairy Scientist, Genetics & Management
(540) 231-4762
bcassell@vt.edu



A Montebéliarde bull.
Photo courtesy of
Filière Montebéliarde,
June 2006—Journal for
the Promotion of the
Montebéliarde Breed.



Sorby, a Swedish Red.
Photo courtesy of AmBreed-New Zealand Ltd.

For more information on Dairy Extension or to learn about current programs, visit us at VT Dairy—Home of the Dairy Extension Program on the web at: www.vtdairy.dasc.vt.edu.

Bennet Cassell

Bennet G. Cassell
Dairy Extension Coordinator
& Extension Dairy Scientist,
Genetics & Management

www.ext.vt.edu

Extension is a joint program of Virginia Tech, Virginia State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and state and local governments.

Virginia Cooperative Extension programs and employment are open to all, regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status. An equal opportunity/affirmative action employer.