Rate your Dairy Feeding and Management Practices

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1. ❑ YES ❑ NO Is there enough space for all cows and others on the lot to eat at the same time when fresh feed is placed in the feedbunk?

2. ❑ YES ❑ NO Is there feed (not corn cobs or fibrous pieces of forage) in the feedbunk the next time you feed your cows?

3. ❑ YES ❑ NO Do your cows have access to their feed 20 hours a day?

If you feed a TMR:

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4. ❑ YES ❑ NO If you feed your cows using a TMR mixer, do you check the accuracy of the scales once a week?

5. ❑ YES ❑ NO If you feed your cows using a TMR mixer, has your nutritionist checked the particle size of the TMR mixture?

If you feed grain in the parlor:

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6. ❑ YES ❑ NO Have you calibrated the amount of grain delivered and consumed within the parlor within the past two months?

7. ❑ YES ❑ NO If you mix your own grain mix, do you check the accuracy of the scale on the grinder mixer before you mix a batch of feed?

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8. ❑ YES ❑ NO Do you have your feed company test your silage each time you change silos or bags?

9. ❑ YES ❑ NO Do you have a forage analysis on the hay you are currently feeding your milking cows?

10. ❑ YES ❑ NO Do you clean out the waterers for the milking herd weekly?

11. ❑ YES ❑ NO When your cows are lying down resting, are 60 to 75% of them chewing their cuds?

12. ❑ YES ❑ NO Has your nutritionist balanced a ration for the milking cows within the last three months?

13. ❑ YES ❑ NO Does your balanced ration reflect the quality and type of forages you are feeding the milking herd currently?

14. ❑ YES ❑ NO Have you compared the amounts to be fed on the balanced ration to the amount of each feed your cows are actually consuming currently?

15. ❑ YES ❑ NO Do you call your nutritionist and ask them to rebalance your ration when you know you will be changing forages in the next three weeks?

16. ❑ YES ❑ NO Have you had the hay and other forages fed to your dry cows and heifers tested for its nutrient content?

17. ❑ YES ❑ NO Have you had your nutritionist balance a ration for your dry cows using the results from the forage analyses?

18. ❑ YES ❑ NO Have you had your nutritionist balance rations for your heifers using the analysis of your forage analyses?

19. ❑ YES ❑ NO If your dry cows are fed free-choice mineral, is there always mineral in the feeder when you come back to add more mineral?

20. ❑ YES ❑ NO Do you manage your dry cows as two separate groups (one group after dry off and the other group within 3 weeks before expected calving date)?

21. ❑ YES ❑ NO Do you “steam up” (increase the amount of grain to 8-10 lbs for Holsteins) your dry cows 3 weeks prior to calving?

22. ❑ YES ❑ NO Do you feed your cows a special diet before calving to help prevent milk fever and other fresh cow problems?

Scoring: Count number of times you answered yes

18 or more yes responses— Excellent management of your cows’ feeding management program

15 or more yes responses– Good management but there are areas to fine tune