

Index to Questions regarding Dairy Cattle Management

	Page
Troubleshooting Nutritional Problems for the dairy herd	2
Evaluation of feeding program for	
Milking Herd	4
Dry cows	5
Cows within 3 weeks of calving	6
Fresh cows	6
Baby Calves	6
Heifers	7
Genetics	7
Production Records	7
Dairy Farm Business Management	8
Reproductive Performance	8
Milk Quality	
High Bacteria Counts	10
Odor	11
Mastitis and/or High Somatic Cell Count	11

Troubleshooting Nutrition Problems for the Dairy Herd

Nutritional Problem	Areas to Investigate to Resolve Problem
Cows not milking as well as expected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Evaluate feeding management program for milking cows (ration and feeding and management practices) b) Evaluate changes in quality of forages being fed c) When was the last time a ration was balanced for the milking herd? d) Has their local veterinarian evaluated the overall health of the herd e) How many cows are recently fresh (average number of days in milk)? f) Evaluate water availability and quality issues
Low butterfat content (less than 3.2% for Holsteins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Re-evaluate ration actually being fed (and consumed) to see that it meets the nutrient requirement of cows b) How many pounds of grain are fed at each feeding- (Want less than 8 lbs per feeding period of 4 hrs) c) Evaluate amount of effective fiber (chew factor) fed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Are cows fed long stem hay? 2) Are cows sorting the TMR being fed? 3) Is the TMR mix overmixed and particle size reduced?
Feet problems- Laminitis (other than hairy heel warts and foot rot)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Evaluate ration fed and consumed by cows (Specifically look at NSC content of diet) b) Evaluate diet consumed by cows for adequate amounts of effective fiber (chew factor to stimulate cud chewing)
High MUN's (Milk Urea Nitrogen content of milk) (Greater than 14-16 mg/dl)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Evaluate the diet consumed by the cows (specifically protein fractions and NSC content)
Diarrhea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Is this a herd problem or does it affect individual cows? b) Has their local veterinarian evaluated the health of these cows affected? (I.e. Winter Dysentery, Salmonella, Johne's Disease) c) Evaluate ration specs of ration actually consumed by cows
Displaced abomasums (twisted stomachs) in mid-lactation cows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Evaluate effective fiber of the diet consumed by the milking herd (TMR length of time mixed, amount of grain fed in 4 hr time period) b) Evaluate amount of sorting done by the cows c) Evaluate macro-mineral (Calcium) content of the milking cow diet

Nutritional Problem	Areas to Investigate to Resolve Problem
Displaced abomasums (twisted stomachs) in cows within 45 days after calving	a) Evaluate transition of cows onto the milking cow ration as well as feeding management program 21 days prior to calving
Milk fever in fresh cows	Evaluate macromineral (potassium, sodium, sulfur, and chlorine – not calcium) content of diet fed 21 days prior to calving
Retained placenta in fresh cows (cows do not clean after calving)	Review mineral/vitamin feeding program during the dry period (ie. Selenium content as well as DCAD balance)
Low body condition of cows less than 60 days in milk	a) Evaluate transition into the milking herd b) Evaluate dry cow and close-up dry cow programs (Are cows adjusted to the forages and increased grain amounts prior to calving) c) Evaluate Feedbunk management for the milking herd to make sure adequate bunk space and feed is provided for fresh cows to eat
Dry cows losing weight	Evaluate feeding program for dry cows– quality of forages being fed, pasture availability, heat stress, and amount of grain being fed
Calving problems in heifers	Evaluate body condition of heifers prior to calving– Are they over conditioned? Evaluate feeding program of heifers
Heifers calving too small	Evaluate feeding program for heifers– Are rations balanced for heifers after forages are tested for their quality? Review pasture management as it relates to quality and quantity
Feet problems in first-calf heifers seen shortly after calving	Evaluate heifer feeding problem to make sure heifers are getting a properly balanced diet

Evaluation of feeding program for Milking Herd

1. Define cattle-
 - a. Breed of cows
 - b. Number of cows (with multiple breeds- specify numbers of each)
 - c. Number of cows milking
 - d. Number of cows fresh within last two months- (How many calves are being fed milk?)
 - e. Current milk production per cow– weight of milk shipped divided by number of cows milking
 - f. Butterfat and somatic cell count of milk being shipped
 - g. Is individual milk production recorded either by the farmer or through DHIA?
2. Define feeding program
 - a. Forages fed
 - i. What forages are being fed currently
 - ii. Recently has the farmer changed silos or type of forages being fed?
 - iii. Collect current forage analyses– if not available collect samples and analyze all forages being fed
 - iv. Are cows on pasture for exercise or to provide a forage source?
 - (1) Species of grasses and legumes in pasture
 - v. Weight of forages being fed– are these weights actually measured or are they estimates? Estimates are just guesses at best!!!
 - b. Concentrates (Grain Mix) Fed
 - i. Composition of grain mix - ingredients with amounts
 - ii. Mixed on-farm or purchased
 - iii. If mixed on-farm- does grinder mixer have a weigh cell? Is it accurate?
 - iv. Collect mineral/vitamin tags and tags for all additives
 - v. How much grain is fed and where is it fed?
 - c. Method forages and concentrates are fed
 - i. Total mixed ration– type of mixer, when purchased
 - ii. Total mixed ration with hay fed separately
 - iii. Grain fed separately from forages– Grain fed in the parlor and toppedressed on silage
 - d. When was the last time their nutritionist (feed company) balanced a ration for the milking herd?
 - i. Ask for a copy of the balanced ration with the nutrient specifications for the balanced ration
3. Feedbunk Management
 - a. Amount of useable feedbunk space
 - b. Number of times fed daily specify time of day
 - c. Location and design of feedbunk - specify height (fenceline feeder or raised feedbunk) and bottom surface
 - d. Is there feed left in the feedbunk when cows are fed the next feeding
 - e. When was the last time the farmer cleaned out the feedbunk?

- f. How many hours a day are cows on the lot close to the feed
 - g. Are cows fed additional feed off the cow lot?
 - h. If hay is fed separately, where is it fed and number of round bales fed at a time?
4. Availability of water
- a. Where are the waterers located
 - b. When was the last time the waterers were cleaned out
 - c. Size of the waterer - how long does it take to refill
 - d. Do cattle have access to pond waterer
5. Evaluate cow comfort
- a. Housing for cows- freestall barn vs outside lot
 - i. Size of freestalls
 - ii. Bedding used
 - iii. How often is the lot scraped
 - b. Do cows walk through mud to get off the lot
 - c. Do cows stay on the concrete or are they allowed off the lot
 - d. How long does it take to milk the herd?
 - e. Heat stress– Are there fans and sprinklers used in the summer over the feedbunk, holding area, and freestalls

Evaluation of feeding management program for dry cows (from date stopped milking until 3 weeks before expected calving date)

- 1. Breed of cows
- 2. Does the farmer have a veterinarian pregnancy check his cows? How often does a veterinarian performance this service for the herd owner annually?
- 3. Housing- where are the dry cows housed after they are dried off?
- 4. Feeding program-
 - a. Forages fed
 - i. What forages are being fed currently
 - ii. Recently has the farmer changed silos or type of forages being fed?
 - iii. Collect current forage analyses– if not available collect samples and analyze all forages being fed
 - iv. Are cows on pasture for exercise or to provide a forage source?
 - (1) Species of grasses and legumes in pasture
 - v. Weight of forages being fed– are these weights actually measured or are they estimates? Estimates are just guesses at best!!!
 - b. Concentrates (Grain Mix) Fed
 - i. Composition of grain mix - ingredients with amounts
 - ii. Mixed on-farm or purchased
 - iii. If mixed on-farm- does grinder mixer have a weigh cell? Is it accurate?
 - iv. Collect mineral/vitamin tags and tags for all additives
 - v. How much grain is fed and where is it fed?
- 5. When is she moved out of the dry cow lot?

Evaluation of feeding Management Program for cows within 3 weeks of calving

1. Housing- where are they housed? Are they housed separately from the milking herd and other dry cows?
2. Feeding program-
 - a. What are they feed?
 - b. Are these cows housed with the milking herd? Are they fed a separate ration or that fed either the dry cows or the milking herd?
 - c. Forages fed
 - i. What forages are being fed currently
 - ii. Recently has the farmer changed silos or type of forages being fed?
 - iii. Collect current forage analyses– if not available collect samples and analyze all forages being fed
 - iv. Are cows on pasture for exercise or to provide a forage source?
 - (1) Species of grasses and legumes in pasture
 - v. Weight of forages being fed– are these weights actually measured or are they estimates? Estimates are just guesses at best!!!
 - d. Concentrates (Grain Mix) Fed
 - i. Composition of grain mix - ingredients with amounts
 - ii. Mixed on-farm or purchased
 - iii. If mixed on-farm- does grinder mixer have a weigh cell? Is it accurate?
 - iv. Collect mineral/vitamin tags and tags for all additives
 - v. How much grain is fed and where is it fed?

Evaluation of Fresh Cow Management

1. If a cow calved this morning- what would happen to her?
2. Have the fresh cows been having health problems?
 - a. If so, what problems?
 - b. How many cows are affected – get farmer to identify cows lost (or sold early) and why
3. Do fresh cows lose body condition rapidly after calving?

Evaluation of feeding management program for baby calves

1. How soon after birth is the calf hand fed colostrum? (How much is she hand fed?)
2. What is she fed from 2 days of age until she is weaned? (For calf starter and milk replacers collect feed tags)
3. Where is she housed? What type of bedding is used?
4. When are calves weaned? How are they weaned?
5. Has the farmer lost any calves in the past few months?

Evaluation of feeding and management program for weaned calves

1. Where are the calves housed after weaning? When are they moved to group pens?
2. What are they fed?

Evaluation of feeding and management program for heifers

1. Describe how heifers are grouped
2. For each group of heifers- identify numbers, breed and age (weights if available)
3. For each group identify forages fed
 - i. What forages are being fed currently
 - ii. Collect current forage analyses– if not available collect samples and analyze all forages being fed
 - iii. Are heifers on pasture for exercise or to provide a forage source?
 - (1) Species of grasses and legumes in pasture
 - iv. Weight of forages being fed– are these weights actually measured or are they estimates? Estimates are just guesses at best!!!
4. For each group of heifers identify concentrates (Grain Mix) Fed
 - i. Composition of grain mix - ingredients with amounts
 - ii. Mixed on-farm or purchased
 - iii. If mixed on-farm- does grinder mixer have a weigh cell? Is it accurate?
 - iv. Collect mineral/vitamin tags and tags for all additives
 - v. How much grain is fed and where is it fed?
5. Water source - how is water provided for each group of heifers?

Genetics

1. Are Herd breedings by AI, herd bull(s) or some combination of the two?
2. If AI is used what are the selection criteria for service sires?
3. How many service sires are used?
4. What is the range for NM\$ of service sires used in the herd?

Production Records

1. Is the herd on DHIA?
2. If on DHIA, what is the herdcode/herdowner name?
3. If not on DHIA, what is the current level of milk shipped per milking cow per day?
4. If not on DHIA, what records are kept on individual cows or the herd?

Dairy Farm Business Management

1. What financial records are kept? Tax records? Cash accounting? Accrual Accounting?
2. Is there a recent balance sheet for the farm?
3. Does the farm have any hired labor?
4. Do you have an estimate of feed cost per cow per day?
5. Do you have an estimate of total cost of production per cwt. of milk?

Evaluation of Reproductive Performance

Herd Name:

Current
Status

1. Number of cows in herd
2. Level of Milk Production
 - A. Pounds/milking cow
 - B. Rolling herd average
3. Percentage of animals bred A.I.
 - A. Heifers
 - B. Cows
4. Average age at first calving
5. Current pregnancy status
 - A. Number of cows pregnant
 - B. Number of cows possibly pregnant
 - C. Number of cows open
6. Average days open
 - A. First lactation
 - B. Second Lactation
 - C. Third + lactation
 - D. All cows
7. Voluntary waiting period
8. Days open at first service
 - A. Less than VWP
 - B. VWP to 100 days
 - C. Over 100 days
9. % of cows open >145 days
10. Average days to first heat
11. % cows in heat by 60d
12. % heats detected
 - A. From DHI-202

B. Calculated

13. Average days to first service

- A. First lactation
- B. Second lactation
- C. Third + lactations
- D. All cows

14. First service conception rate

- A. Replacements
- B. Milking cows

15. Average services/conception

- A. Replacements
- B. First lactation
- C. Second lactation
- D. Third + lactation
- E. All milking cows

16. % of cows pregnant \leq 3 services

17. Average conception rate

- A. July, August and September
- B. October - June

18. Average days dry

19. % culled for infertility

20. Abortion rate (%)

21. Does this farm have access to quality veterinary advice and services?

- A. Yes
- B. No

22. Is herd management willing to utilize veterinary support?

- A. Yes
- B. No

23. Does this herd vaccinate for the major reproductive diseases?

- A. Yes
- B. No

24. Are the cows/heifers consuming infected fescue?

- A. Yes
- B. No

25. Are the cows consuming unacceptable levels of mycotoxins?

- A. Yes
- B. No

26. Number of cows with these conditions in the past year.

- A. Milk fever
- B. Ketosis
- C. Displaced abomasums
- D. Retained placenta
- E. Cystic ovaries
- F. Foot problems

27. General assessment of body condition

Too Thin Good Too Fat

- A. At drying off
- B. At calving
- C. 60 days after calving
- D. 100 days after calving
- E. At first insemination
- F. At pregnancy diagnosis
- G. At 200 days after calving

28. For A.I. herds: Yes No

- A. Does conception rate vary by service sire?
- B. Does conception rate vary by technician?
- C. Is semen stored correctly?
- D. Is the tank locked?
- E. Is semen thawed and handled correctly?
- F. Is the thermometer accurate?
- G. Are proper insemination procedures used?
- H. Are any DUMPS sires being used?
- I. Are cows bred at the proper time?
- J. Is heat detection accurate?

Milk Quality

High Bacteria Counts

What were bacterial counts for the previous 4 months?

What were PI counts?

What is the temperature history of the bulk tank?

What is the pickup schedule?

What is the teat prep. procedure?

What is the milk equipment cleaning cycle?

How often is the equipment washed?

What is the appearance of the inside of the bulk tank after cleaning?

How is the bulk tank valve cleaned?

What is the SCC count and has it changed recently?

When were gaskets and liners last replaced?

Does the milk have an odor?

Does the milk look normal?
What are the cows fed?

Odor

Describe the milk odor
Describe the milk appearance, taste?
What are the cows fed”
What is the temperature history?
What sanitizer is used?

Mastitis and/or high somatic cell count (SCC)

Basic Information

Name:

Address:

Phone Number:

E-mail Address:

Milk Plant or Coop:

Field Person - Phone Number:

Veterinarian - Phone Number:

DHIA Herd Code:

Number of cows being milked:

1. What is your coop or milk plant producer number? (So we can access your milk quality report on the internet)
2. If your reports are not available on the internet, what was your bulk tank SCC for the last year? What was your bulk tank bacteria count for the last year?
3. Who is your veterinarian?
Name
Address
Phone Number
4. What teat dip for post milking teat dipping is being used?

5. Are teats being dipped or sprayed after milking?
6. Are cows being dry treated when turned dry? If yes, what antibiotic product is being used? Are all quarters of all cows being dry treated?
7. Have cows been purchased in the last year?
Source of cows?
Age of cows?
8. Has the milking system been checked and serviced by a qualified technician recently?
When serviced?
By Whom?
9. Has the milk from any cows been cultured to determine the possible bacteria causing the mastitis?
What were the culture results?
10. What type of housing is used for the cows?