



# DAIRYINFO

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*Taking service to another level!*

## **HEAT STRESS... beware!**

Cool spring weather quickly gives way to summer heat and humidity, which cows do not handle well. Are you prepared for the eventuality of heat and humidity this summer, along with the impact of heat stress on herd health, productivity and profitability? Typically, the biggest limitation to milk production during hot weather is adequate feed intake. A decline in intake as temperatures rise means that the density of all nutrients in the diet must increase if milk yield is to be maintained (provided these changes can be made and still maintain proper rumen health and function). Management during hot weather should be aimed at whatever measures are necessary to encourage feed intake because it is difficult to provide sufficient nutrients if feed intake is severely depressed. There are several things to consider with the care of dairy cows during hot weather. These include:

- Deliver a ration similar to the one that is formulated
- Provide adequate feed at all times
- Provide adequate bunk space for cows
- Create a desirable feed bunk environment
- Clean the feed bunk frequently
- Ensuring access to unlimited fresh, clean water
- Analyze ingredients and rations to ensure accurate ration formulation and balance
- Feed high quality ingredients
- Minimize drastic ration changes, which may force cows to go off feed
- Use a total mixed ration (TMR) to ensure consistent intake of balanced diet with little sorting of ingredients

Intensive management can reduce the impact of hot weather on milk yield and profitability. Be proactive and prepare for hot weather before it arrives, and remember that dairy cows suffer from heat stress at lower temperatures than humans. Because the weather is comfortable for you does not mean that it is not sapping production from your dairy cows. Prepare for hot weather:

- Protect cows from direct sunlight ~ provide shade
- Provide additional cooling with fans and sprinklers
- Provide high quality forage
- Add fat to the diet for supplement energy
- Feed smaller meals several times daily, which will help to promote intake
- Feed during the cooler periods of the day

By using good management techniques, high yields from lactating dairy cows can be maintained during hot weather and well into the fall and winter months.

(Edited from an article by Joe West, University of Georgia Extension)

## ***Beyond planting comes harvest...***

You're ready to plant – or have already done this – and it's time to think about preserving forages for the coming fall and winter months. Regardless of which class of product you choose (acid or inoculant), it is important to ensure you use a quality, research-tested products. There are always cheaper preservatives and inoculants on the market. These are often marketed using such phrases as, "why pay more..." and "get the same results at a lower cost." If you did not early order your inoculant, before you purchase what appears to be a lower-cost alternative product be sure to check out what you are actually buying! Many low-cost acid preservatives use "spent" (or used) byproducts in their manufacturing process. Analysis of these low-cost products often shows elevated levels of dangerous metals and related substances, which can be harmful to humans and animals during application or ingestion. Buy-cheap is not always buy-wise, and can inevitably cost much more in the end. We all need to be alert to possible concerns, analytical details, and application requirements and precautions no matter what is purchased.

Contact us at W-S Feed & Supplier for our suggestions and recommendations, when it comes to high quality, research-tested preservatives and inoculants that are safe and effective, and can impact forages from ensiling through feed-out. Get the facts and plan to preserve all your forages this coming season. This will make a difference now... and when you feed it to livestock. It is an investment in your feeding program that can save time and money in the end.

**WHEN IT COMES TO HEAT STRESS...  
REMEMBER YOUR COWS, CALVES,  
HEIFERS & DRY COWS  
CHECK ALL YOUR LIVESTOCK!  
HEAT & HUMIDITY CAN  
CRITICALLY IMPACT  
ANIMALS & PEOPLE.**

*Interested in discussing topics in this newsletter, or want to do a better job feeding and managing your cows? Call us!  
Our goal is to help you. That's the W-S Feed commitment!*

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Where Service Comes First!**

# Cow Comfort!

There is a lot of research focusing on cow comfort, and its impact on productivity and profitability. Cow comfort is a key to reaching milk production goals ~ along with good nutrition and genetics. When quality nutrition and good genetics are combined with ideal cow comfort, cows will produce more milk and generally live longer, healthier lives. Consider the picture of cows resting in a soft meadow on a summer's day; a stream flows nearby, through a grove of trees; a gentle breeze stirs the air – the cows seem to have it all and the scene is idyllic. This paints a picture of quality feed, fresh water, good ventilation, fresh air, a soft and clean place to rest and sound footing. Ideal cow comfort includes each of these components. Are your cows enjoying the “comforts of home”?

## Importance of developing the future herd...

Nutrition and management critically influence the health and growth of your future lactating herd: calves and replacement heifers! On many farms, raising replacement animals represents 15-20% of the cost of producing milk. The goal is encouraging heifers to grow and develop to their full lactation potential at a desired age and at minimal expense. In order to achieve optimum results, consider implementing a quality nutrition and management program for calves and heifers ~ in fact your entire herd! This can make a positive difference in both productivity and profitability. A calf and replacement heifer program is an investment. Start growing your future today! Set goals and targets, such as first calving at 24-months of age. Monitor their growth and development very closely, since they do represent an investment in your future lactating herd. How they perform now represents how they are likely to perform later on. In addition to their nutritional program, be sure to implement good vaccination protocols, hygiene, and reducing as many stress factors as possible. In the end, this will pay dividends. I'll be happy to review your entire program and work with you toward greater success.



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