



# DAIRYINFO

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*Taking service to another level!*

## **Summer Strategies for Dairies...**

Summers are a challenge when managing dairy cows. Dairy producers lose milk sales annually because of heat stress. The combination of high temperature and humidity is especially stressful to dairy cows, resulting in decreased feed intake, milk production, milk fat percentage, and reproductive efficiency.

Water, feed and shade are critical in managing heat stress. Water helps regulate temperature. As the temperature rises [above 24°C], the respiration rate increases and sweating occurs, increasing water loss from the lungs and skin.

Cows need to consume a large amount of water daily as temperatures rise. Therefore, an adequate water supply is essential. It should be conveniently located, clean, and preferably in a shaded location. Try providing a water supply in the holding area or the exit from the parlor, in every crossover alley and/or near the feed to improve water intake, cow comfort and performance.

Be sure to check dry matter intake. The cow's first response to heat stress is to reduce dry matter intake, especially as the temperature rises above 25°F. Usually the cow reduces forage consumption first, if she has a choice. This can result in rumen acidosis and cows going "off feed."

A consistent, well-balanced and palatable ration is essential to maintaining intake during heat stress. The summer feed slump can be minimized by using high quality forages. In some cases, the amount of forage is reduced to maintain intake. But milk fat percentage may decrease as forage consumption declines.

Total mixed rations (TMRs) help maintain intake by decreasing feed sorting and feed selection, thus reducing acidosis and "off-feed" problems. Some wet feed, such as silage, stimulates intake in a TMR, provided you feed the ration frequently. A wet TMR may spoil rapidly, especially with summer heat. Only feed what cows will clean up and feed them more frequently.

Because intake is reduced during hot weather, the concentration of nutrients in the ration may need to be increased (safely). Consider adjusting protein levels, along with a possible need for more energy in the ration. Increasing mineral consumption may also may be beneficial. Feeding higher potassium and sodium levels only to the milking cows can effectively help reduce the impact of heat stress. However, if fed to dry cows, these mixes may cause increased milk fever and/or udder edema.

Cows tend to eat more feed in the cool of the night rather than during the day. Adjust feeding rates so less is fed during the day and more at night, thus reducing feed spoilage and improving dry matter intake. Make sure the feed area is well lighted during nighttime feedings.



## **Forage Quality?**

What is the quality of the forage you harvest? This includes grass and alfalfa for hay or haylage, small grain crops used as a forage source, and corn! The quality of your forages will impact your herd's productivity and profitability. The timing of cutting, along with the length of cut, sharpness of the blades, dry matter content prior to baling or ensiling, and weather-related conditions will affect the end results – making milk and helping to maintain good body condition. Your herd depends on quality forages to produce to their optimum potential. When you combine quality forages with a balanced ration, clean water and good overall management you probably won't be disappointed! Additionally, it is beneficial to treat your baled or ensiled forages with a quality, research-tested inoculant or preservative such as a **LALLEMAND/BIOTAL** product, which are offered through W-S Feed. Feed quality for results... from field to bank! Do your forages measure up? Get the facts and help to ensure your cows are eating quality forages year-round.

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*Some areas will be able to have another planting yet this summer... and others in the early-to-mid fall. Don't wait to order your seed products. The sooner you order, the sooner this can be shipped for planting at the appropriate time. Once in-hand, you can plan ahead and watch weather conditions for a best-time to get the next planting done. Contact W-S Feed for more information and where you might locate seed to plant this summer or fall. We're here to work with you!*

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

**VOLUME 7 – Number 7 – July 2017**  
**W-S FEED... SOLUTIONS & RESULTS**  
**THE TEAM FOR SUCCESS!**  
**WE ARE HERE FOR YOU ALL YEAR.**



### **BEWARE of Silo Gas!**

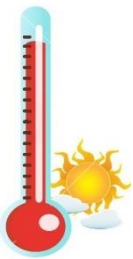
Silo gas forms after chopped green forages are harvested, placed into storage and begin to ferment. While this is more commonly associated with corn silage, it can also occur with hay and grain-crop silages. Nitrogen oxide (NO) is one of the gases present in silo gas. When NO combines with oxygen it forms Nitrous Oxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), a corrosive and very toxic gas that is heavier than air. Because silo gas is heavier than air it tends to settle on the silage surface and flow down the silo chute in upright silos. When inhaled, NO<sub>2</sub> mixes with water present in the human body producing nitric acid, which causes burning/scarring of the lungs and respiratory system. The condition is known as silo filler's disease. It can result in serious, permanent lung injury and even death. Symptoms of exposure to silo gas include coughing, burning, chills, fever and nausea. Producers who suspect that they have been exposed to silo gas should seek medical assistance immediately. Silo filler's disease can be prevented by the following practices (and several others): (a) do not enter the silo for 2-3 weeks after silo filling has been completed; (b) run the silo blower for 30 minutes before entering the silo and leave it running while you are in the silo; (c) ventilate the silo room before and during entry. Get ALL the facts and precautions before your start ensiling this summer/fall! (Edited from an article by M. McFadden, MI State University Extension)



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***JULY 2017***

***CHECK IT OUT!***