



# DAIRYINFO

W-S Feed & Supplies, Ltd.  
1805 Sawmill Road  
Conestogo, ON N0B 1N0  
Canada  
1.800.265.2203  
www.wsfeeds.ca

*Taking service to another level!*

## **Heifers – Your Future Herd!**

Quality heifers are an investment in your future herd. How you manage them and what you feed them will determine, in part, whether or not they are an expense... or an investment. Research provides valuable insights and goals for raising replacement heifers as an investment. These include such things as age at first calving between 22 and 24 months; body weight (Holsteins) immediately after first calving of about 567 kg and height of at least 137 cm at the withers; a body condition score at calving of 3.25; and growth rates from 3-10 months of age averaging 0.77 to 0.9 kg per day. This is, of course, the *ideal*.

Maximizing the growth of heifers is critical to their lifetime profitability on your farm! Here are some tips to help ensure your heifers are keeping pace and becoming an investment rather than a cost-center. These recommendations are taken from Dr. Mike VandeHaar at the University of Michigan.

1. Provide a clean, dry environment with fresh, clean water available at all times. Good care and housing will have a positive impact on heifer growth. You need to balance the ration for optimum per-day weight gain. A free choice TMR is suggested. The combined potential of a good environment and a carefully balanced ration can be outstanding.
2. Measure progress. Since heifers represent an investment in your future productivity and profitability, it is critical to measure the continuing success of your program and be willing to make adjustments as necessary. This can include carefully looking at your heifers each day, as well as using a scale or tape measure to check on weight and height. It is even worth the time to chart their development on a regular basis. Important times include weaning, approximately five months of age, breeding, and just after calving.
3. Work with a good nutritionist. The importance of good nutrition for your heifers is well documented! A good nutritionist can help you design and implement a result-oriented replacement heifer program, and pay attention to such things as protein, minerals and vitamins in the ration. It is also important to work with your veterinarian to develop and maintain a schedule of immunizations and general health care. The results will be healthier heifers with improved growth rates.

I can help evaluate your current replacement heifer program! It can make a difference in the future of your herd. Call today... and make heifers an important entity on your farm.

## **Balancing amino acids for herd performance & the bottom line ~**

Balancing the amino acid levels in dairy rations is a common management tool for increasing milk yield, components, herd performance, and income over feed cost (IOFC). The amino acid levels are balanced using ration formulation software. Balancing the levels assures that those amino acids that are essential – the ones that cows cannot make themselves – are available in both the proper amount and proportion for optimal production and performance. Essential amino acids must come from the ration. If a ration doesn't contain enough of an essential amino acid, that amino acid actually becomes limiting. A shortage can literally limit the animal's production and performance. In most U.S. rations, the first two limiting amino acids are methionine and lysine. Several commercial rumen-protected amino acid products answer the demand for supplemental amino acids.

Amino acid balancing with a commercial product becomes particularly important during the transition period. Commercial rumen-protected amino acid products are concentrated nutrient sources. They take up minimal space in rations that already have limited dry matter space; more space is left for high-quality forages and/or other feedstuffs.

Amino acid balancing is commonly associated with herds producing approximately 36 kg or more milk/cow/day. With herds producing less, other management factors may require attention before the herd can fully realize the benefits of amino acid balancing. Your Renaissance nutritionist also has options when balancing a ration. By decreasing the ration's protein content, balancing the amino acid levels and maintaining existing production levels, the lowered protein cost will help to increase IOFC. The same is true when maintaining the protein content, balancing amino acid levels, and formulating for increased production.

When using amino acid balancing as a management tool, keep total production in mind in addition to component percentages. Many dairy producers are paid based on the pounds of butterfat and protein shipped from the farm. An increase in the pounds shipped can result from an increase in component percentages, but it can also result from an increase in milk flow. Properly balancing for amino acids can help both.

What role do amino acids have in your ration program? We would be happy to review this and discuss the best approach to ensuring your cows are getting what they need when it comes to amino acids... and maintaining production and profit!

*(Edited from article by Ajinomoto Heartland, Inc.)*

*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!*

**VOLUME 7 – Number 1 – January 2017**  
**W-S... THE TEAM FOR SUCCESS!**

A new year is here with many possibilities, challenges, concerns and expectations. It's a time when people make "resolutions" – how they intend to change or do things differently in the coming days, weeks and months. Sadly, most of these are forgotten (or abused) in a relatively short period of time. We don't know what the future holds and it does no good to fret and worry about it. A healthy exercise, however, is to take time to reflect and work on things we can change, along with counting and appreciating the many blessings that are ours to enjoy. We wish you a New Year filled with good things! Welcome to 2017.

*Happy New Year!*

### **WHAT ARE YOUR COWS TELLING YOU?**

Cows cannot produce milk on feed they do not eat! Consider the following 'tips' now... and all year-round:

- a) Keep the feedbunk filled, pushing feed up to the cows regularly;
- b) Don't feed spoiled feed;
- c) Evaluate bunk space per cow (about 2-2.5' bunk space/cow);
- d) Clean the feed bunk on a scheduled basis;
- e) Take time to observe your cows after feeding.

Look for things such as sorting, as well as more social-oriented activities like excessive dominance and competition for feed. Do smaller and younger animals get pushed away from the bunk? Is there excessive mud, manure, water, ice or other debris that impede movement to/from the bunk? Developing the best feeding system for your herd requires careful observation and sometimes management changes. But, attention to these things will have a positive impact on productivity and profitability. The cows work hard for you... give them the best and watch them work even harder!



W-S Feed & Supplies, Ltd.  
1805 Sawmill Road  
Conestogo, ON N0B 1N0  
Canada  
[www.wsfeeds.ca](http://www.wsfeeds.ca)  
*Taking service to another level*



***Heifers – Your Future Herd!***  
***Balancing amino acids for herd performance ~***  
***What are your cows telling you?***

***JANUARY 2017***  
***CHECK IT OUT!***