



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!

Summer Strategies for Dairy!

Summers can be challenging when managing dairy cows. Dairy producers often lose milk sales each summer because of the impact 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. It also impacts the growth and development of calves and heifers, while additionally having a negative impact on dry and transition cows. These "other" groups around a dairy often go unnoticed, and the impact can persist for many months.

Water, feed and shade are critical in managing heat stress. Water helps regulate temperature. As the temperature rises [above 22°C], the respiration rate increases and sweating will occur, increasing water loss from the lungs and skin.

Cows need to consume large amounts 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 of the parlor, at the exit from the parlor, in every crossover alley and/or near the feed to improve cow comfort and performance. Of equal or even greater importance is how clean the water for consumption is, along with the water tank. Good hygiene can make a critical difference by helping to reduce possible pathogens from the water source.

Be sure to check dry matter intakes! A cow's first response to heat stress is often noted by a reduction in dry matter intake, especially as the temperature rises above 25°C. 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 intakes 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, helping to reduce acidosis and "off-feed" problems. Some wet feed, such as silage, may stimulate intakes in a TMR, provided you feed the ration frequently. However, a wet TMR may spoil rapidly, especially with summer heat. Only feed what cows will clean up and plan to feed them more frequently.

Because intakes are often 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 through the ration may also be beneficial. For instance, feeding higher levels of potassium and sodium to milk cows can effectively help to reduce the impact of heat stress. However, if fed to dry cows, these mixes may cause increased udder edema.

Cows tend to eat more feed in the cool of the night rather than during the day. It might be worthwhile to adjust feeding rates (and times) so that less is fed during the day and more at night. This can help to reduce feed spoilage and improve dry matter intakes. Make sure the feed area is well lighted during nighttime feedings.

Summer can have an impact on your dairy's productivity and profitability in both the immediate and long-term projections. The effects of heat stress usually linger weeks and even months after it has past, which makes summer strategies all the more important. And make sure that all age groups on your farm are carefully considered. Summer strategies can pay big dividends in the fall and through the coming seasons.

PREDICTING GROWTH & HARVEST

Growing degree days (GDD) are experience-based tools in plant and animal development. They are most often used in projecting forage growth, development and potential harvest, while some agronomists use this in examining insect populations and their possible plight with various forages. GDD is a measure of heat accumulation used by agronomists and farmers to help predict plant and animal/insect development rates, such as the date of bloom, crop maturity, etc. In the absence of extreme conditions (unseasonal drought or disease), plants grow in a cumulative stepwise manner, which is strongly influenced by the ambient temperature. GDD take into account aspects of local weather and allow you to reasonably predict the plants' pace toward maturity. Know the GDDs for your area, which can be used to: (1) assess the suitability of your area for production of a particular crop; (2) estimate the growth-stages of crops, weeds or even insects; (3) predict maturity and cutting dates of forage crops; (4) predict best timing of fertilizer or pesticide application; (5) estimate heat stress on crops; (6) plan spacing of planting dates to facilitate separate harvest dates. Get the facts, and let them work for you and your farm.

SUMMER IS HERE!
ARE YOU READY FOR HEAT STRESS?
W-S FEED... *quality & service!*

Interested in discussing topics in this newsletter, or to do a better job feeding and managing your cows? Call us today.

Our goal and commitment is to help you!

VOLUME 4 – Number 7 – July 2014
THE TEAM FOR RESULTS

Preserving Quality!

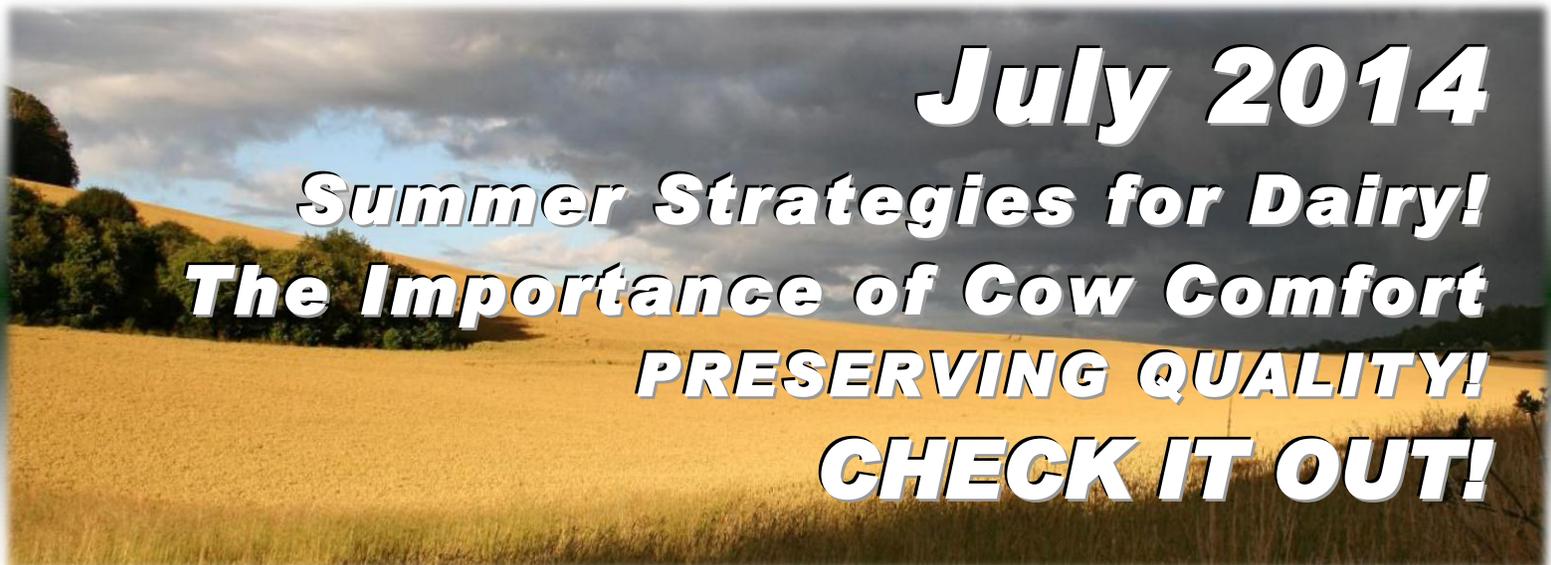
Maintaining quality is important to any forage program... baled hay, haylage, small grain or corn silage. Depending on the timing and quality of the forage at harvest, the application of a research-tested inoculant or preservative can help to maintain the nutrient value of the ensiled forage. It can help to keep poor silages from getting worse, while enhancing good silage. Preserving forage is really an investment in your ration program! We can recommend products for proven results. These preservatives and inoculants can help to maximize forage quality, and may improve productivity and bottom line profitability. Get details and start on the road to success and results... preservatives and inoculants from W-S Feed. This is an investment that can give you a real return from chopping- and ensiling- until feedout. Check it out! Ask me today.

THE IMPORTANCE OF COW COMFORT

If your cows could somehow give you a cow comfort and facilities management "report card," what grade do you think they would give you? During the months of summer, it is a good time to make a checklist of these concerns and considerations. Cow comfort is not some 'out of this world' idea, but very real, day-to-day considerations that can help (or hurt) your income possibilities. There are several cow comfort issues that can make a big difference in the health and productivity of your cows. Consider these: (1) Do your cows suffer from overcrowding? This is a problem on many farms. If you have no option, try to do it where it will hurt you less – mid- to late-lactation. The best way to deal with overcrowding is not allowing it to happen. Overcrowding creates an excellent environment for stress, along with increased risks for environmental mastitis and laminitis. Giving your cows plenty of "elbow room" can make a difference in their health and productivity. This is also critically important when we consider the addition of heat stress. (2) Also, make sure you provide them with adequate access to fresh, clean water and a balanced ration. Addressing cow comfort in a positive way is an investment with the potential of many excellent benefits. How does your report card look? I'll be happy to work with you in reviewing and addressing these issues and concerns. It can make a positive difference this summer and all year-round!



W-S Feed & Supplies, Ltd.
1805 Sawmill Road
Conestogo, ON N0B 1N0
Canada
www.wsfeeds.ca
Taking service to another level



July 2014

Summer Strategies for Dairy! The Importance of Cow Comfort

PRESERVING QUALITY!

CHECK IT OUT!