



**W-S Feed & Supplies, Ltd.**  
 1805 Sawmill Road  
 Conestogo, ON N0B 1N0  
 Canada  
 1.800.265.2203  
[www.wsfeeds.ca](http://www.wsfeeds.ca)  
*Taking service to another level*

### Dealing with volatility & increased costs...

Prices for corn grain, soybean meal, and other commodities have skyrocketed in recent weeks and months. Much of this increase in cost has resulted from lower carryover from stockpiles of last year's crops, drought conditions that have limited or prevented pollination and/or development of corn kernels, drought conditions limiting soybean production and uncertainty of this year's crops. In August, the USDA decreased projected yields of corn grain by 22.6 bushels to 123.4 bushels/acre, the lowest in 7 years. Prices of all feed commodities are tied to the prices of corn and soybean meal, thus major increases have been seen in these also. Milk prices seem to be improving, thus giving a positive spin on a very trying situation. One key for surviving these very trying times is to step back from the situation and think through ways you can make the best of what is happening. Consider these possibilities:

#### What can dairy farmers do to endure fluctuating prices?

- **Be proactive:** Step back and re-examine your feeding program- not only from a standpoint of what you are feeding but also how you feed and manage your cows. Sometimes we get caught up in the day-to-day tasks and forget the big picture. There are things you can do to improve upon a difficult situation. This may entail trying new feedstuffs in your dairy herd's diet, reexamining how you do things, and listening to suggestions from neighboring farmers and industry personnel to see how you might incorporate these suggestions.
- **Plan ahead for this next feeding year now:**
  - Test all forages. Sample and test all of the forages for their nutrient content. This includes forages that are targeted to be fed to the dry cows and heifers. Cost savings may be realized through feeding programs for heifers and dry cows. Small savings in multiple places can help cash flow. Also, nutrient content of forages will definitely vary from previous crops on your farm.
  - Sort forages by their quality. Energy is the hardest nutrient to provide to lactating dairy cows. Cows need to consume higher energy forages. Within the milking herd, the highest quality forages should be fed to the early lactation cows and/or the high group. This may mean feeding more than one ration to your herd or more rations if you already group feed. By sorting available forages by quality, you can target those cows with higher nutrient needs or times of the year when more cows are in early lactation. Within a particular forage increases in the content of acid detergent (ADF) or neutral detergent fiber (NDF) result in cattle eating less feed. Of what they do eat, they get less energy for milk production or growth.
  - Inventory available forages separated by their quality. Share forage inventories with your nutritionist.
  - Develop a plan for using available forages. Consider where forages will be best suited based on their

quality. Now is the time to identify shortfalls and develop a plan to purchase forages if needed. Some producers have replanted other forages (fall planting is recommended as needed) for additional crops. Depending on your geographic location, you may still have a window of opportunity for fall planting.

- **Review cow production/management records.** Identify cows that should be culled or dried off early: cows with longer days in milk and short bred, problem breeders, and/or those with milk production below the level needed to at least cover feed costs may need to be culled or dried off early. For example, if it costs \$7.18 per day to feed the average cow in your herd, cows would have to produce over 40 lbs of milk (assumes \$18/cwt milk) to cover feed costs alone.
- **Review feed storage methods to minimize losses:** Feed losses can quickly increase feed cost. Good management and feeding practices can help minimize these losses.
  - Properly covered silage decreases losses
  - Manage the face of bunkers, bags and upright silos to minimize silage heating by maintaining a clean face between feedings.
  - Prevent losses when storing concentrates and/or commodities: wind, rodents, etc.
  - Check weigh scales to make sure they are working properly and accurately.
  - Regularly review the dry matters of forages and adjust accordingly.
- **Contact your W-S nutritionist** and work with them to review and/or adjust your feeding programs, and to ensure they are as economical as possible, while continuing to meet your heifer and cow needs for maintenance, growth, productivity and profitability.
- **Check out lower-priced commodities and byproducts** to see if any can replace some of your current ingredients. Remember nutrients need to be met, rather than using specific ingredients in the ration.
- **Work with your W-S nutritionist** to evaluate your calf, heifer and dry cow programs!

Together we can work toward solutions for problems, improved costs and better results this fall and in the future.

*(Edited from an article by D.M. Amaral-Phillips, U of KY Extension, 2012)*

## SOLUTIONS FOR SUCCESS!

**CONSIDER FALL SEEDING TODAY  
 PLAN AHEAD FOR 2013**

### NEED SEED & PRESERVATIVE? CALL US!

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

**VOLUME 2 – Number 9 – September 2012  
 THE TEAM FOR RESULTS**



# Make an investment!

## PRESERVATIVES for RESULTS!

It's time to think about preservatives and inoculants that can help preserve your forages this year. I can offer you quality **BIOTAL** and **ALLTECH** products, which are research-tested for results time after time. These products can help maximize forages, improving productivity and profitability. Get the facts and plan to use one of these excellent products this fall – an investment in quality nutrition! You (and your cows) will appreciate the results... preservatives and inoculants from W-S FEED!



## Forage inventories... ready for fall and winter!

In a year of drought and variable weather patterns, it is critical to know your forage inventories. Some areas have had adequate rainfall, while others have been lacking the necessary rain to make a difference in their crops this year. Do you know what your forage inventories are going to be? Don't wait until fall or winter to check this out. When the possibility of forage shortages exists, planning ahead can help to save time, money and frustration later on. Once you have determined if there is a shortage and the amount of available forage you will have to work with – then begin to strategize how you are going to meet the needs and demands for your livestock this winter. The options are many, but forward planning is critically important. Here are a few suggestions to consider if forage shortages are possible:

- ◆ Plant specific forage crops this month! Check what is available... purchase now and plant as soon as possible, if you are going to need a fall cutting to aid forage supplies.
- ◆ Locate other producers that may have forages to sell! Make sure you purchase not only on price, but also on the overall quality and nutrient value of these forages.
- ◆ Work closely with your W-S FEED nutritionist to determine the most effective ways of feeding what you have (or can buy).
- ◆ Make sure all the cows in your herd are paying their way! This might be a good time to cull cows that are lagging or have not been productive.

We will be happy to work with you to discover the best solution for your situation.



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*

# September 2012...

**Dealing with volatility & increased costs...  
Forage inventories...  
Make an investment!**

## CHECK IT OUT!

