

dps MOOSLETTER

A “Monthly Moo” to Valued Clients and Friends...

In this issue:

- Hot Weather’s Here! Are You Ready?
- The Dairy Cow’s Most Essential Nutrient
- June’s Milk Quality Tip
- Industry News, Links & Dates to Remember
- Ponderings

Welcome to The Moos!

Greetings and welcome to “The Moosletter”! We’re happy to have you on board and look forward to sharing the latest news, views, and happenings in the dairy world, tailored just for you, our valued clients and industry friends. Each month, we’ll bring you pertinent information related to the sustainability of today’s dairy farm... We’ll focus on management techniques for production efficiency, milk quality, and animal health and well-being.



Thank you Dairy Farmers! We salute your hard work to provide us with nutritious dairy foods from healthy, happy, well-cared for cows!

It takes teamwork...

We want to be closely connected to you and your business in a personal and meaningful way. We believe in the value of quality communication, and that being well informed and up to speed with what is going on in our industry is one of the keys to success. To that end, we welcome your input and suggestions as to how we can add value for each and every reader in each monthly issue.

HOT WEATHER’S HERE! ARE YOU READY?

Keeping Cows Comfortable Pays!



Dairy farmers face many challenges. Near the top of the list is the task of keeping cows comfortable on a year-

round basis. Comfortable cows are happy cows and happy cows produce more milk. Here in the Southeast, that means keeping cows cool in hot, extremely humid temperatures. Every operation is different, but without fail, every operator should be focused on those things which create the best environment for the health and well-being of the cow and the greatest opportunity to maintain maximum flow of high quality milk!

1. Provide cows with ample clean, dry shade in order to maintain maximum cow comfort along with preventing nasty conditions that are not conducive to superior milk quality. (Most experts call for a minimum of 100 ft²/cow.)
2. Cattle lounging areas must be regularly groomed and maintained to provide for optimum cow and udder health. If pastures and shade trees are utilized, shade trees must be fenced off to survive, and pastures should be frequently rotated to prevent muddy conditions. Cattle should NOT be allowed access to ponds or other muddy areas.
3. Water troughs should be inspected daily to insure they are in proper working condition. Water troughs should be cleaned and disinfected weekly.
4. Fans should be in good working order and there should be a routine to clean them regularly to maintain fan efficiency and maximum airflow.
5. Misters should be in good working order. For best results, misters should be used in conjunction with fans. Misters should be set up on timers to run alternately three (3) minutes out of every fifteen (15) during time when heat stress is a risk. Alternating the application of water in short periods with longer periods for fans to blow on cows creates the most advantageous conditions of evaporative cooling, as well as minimizing water use.
6. Feed rations should be carefully reviewed by a qualified nutritionist to ensure that heat stress is considered and that the ration is as nutrient-dense as possible. This allows cattle the best opportunity to meet their nutritional needs for maintenance and milk production.

THE DAIRY COW'S MOST ESSENTIAL NUTRIENT

Doesn't come in a bag...

“Water as an essential nutrient is second only to oxygen in importance to sustain life and optimized growth, lactation, and reproduction. However, unlike the care and continuous attention paid by dairy producers and nutritionists to other nutrients in the ration, oftentimes the quality and provision of free drinking water does not receive the attention necessary to ensure optimal nutrition and cattle performance.”

That's a direct quote from one of several papers written by my friend, Dr. Dave Beede, Department of Animal Science, Michigan State University, on the subject of water for dairy cattle. (Dr. Beede was formerly on staff here at the University of Florida, so he knows something about both cold AND hot weather dairying!) You can read this complete article [here](#) and I highly recommend it.



His message is really pretty simple. We spend an inordinate amount of time studying feed rations, testing ingredients, and measuring micronutrients that are delivered to the feedbunk. However, we rarely consider whether the water supply to our cattle is adequate either in quality or quantity as intensely as we should. The “take away points” from his work are:

1. First, you should have the water supply of your cattle tested to make sure that it is adequate and does not contain anything that makes it problematic for their health and well-being. (See article for details.)
2. If testing determines that the content of the water supply is problematic, it should be verified with subsequent testing. If remediation is necessary, seek qualified professional assistance.
3. Dairymen should ensure that drinking space is adequate. Research has shown that cows will drink 50-60% of their daily water needs immediately after milking. Have water available on the way back to the parlor from milking!
4. As a guide, facilities should provide for 2 linear feet of trough space per cow in the return lanes from the milking parlor based on the size of the parlor and the throughput rate. (i.e., a double-10 herringbone parlor would require a trough that provides 20 linear feet in the return lane(s) from the parlor. Depending on the configuration of the parlor and parlor throughput, up to 40 linear feet may be required for a double-10 parlor as cows will line up to drink in much the same way as they line up to eat at the feed bunk.
5. Provide a minimum of two (2) water sources per group of cows, and ensure that cows never have to walk more than 50 feet to drink.
6. Relatively shallow troughs (6-12” of water depth) with high-capacity automated filling hardware are best. Keeps the water supply fresher, and the troughs are easier to clean.
7. And my favorite: **If you won't drink from the trough yourself, then the water supply for your cows is not clean enough!** Keep that in mind as you walk your place and inspect water troughs! Seriously, water troughs should be drained and cleaned (use a brush and chlorine to kill algae growth, and rinse well before refilling....) on a regular and as-needed basis, but **at least weekly**.

Give your cows and their water supply the attention they deserve and have the assurance that your cows are not being cheated out of their **most essential nutrient!**

JUNE'S MILK QUALITY TIP

Cutting Corners Cuts Quality!



All farmers are in the business of producing food for human consumption. As such, sanitation is always of primary concern. In the case of dairy farmers, milk is not only highly perishable to begin with, but is also a perfect medium for bacterial growth in the absence of good hygiene. Maintaining superior quality does not allow for short-cuts during wash-up!

To achieve the best results:

1. After milking, immediately rinse lines with a tepid (110°F) rinse of potable water. (Not HOT and not COLD!) Shut vacuum off and drain system.
2. Prepare detergent solution according to manufacturer's label using HOT (170°F) water. Circulate as recommended or until return temperature drops below 120°F. Shut vacuum off and drain.
3. Prepare food-grade acid rinse solution according to manufacturer's label in cold water, circulating as recommended. Shut system off and drain.
4. Immediately prior to milking, prepare a 200 ppm chlorine solution in HOT (170°F) water. Circulate five (5) minutes. Drain system and proceed with milking.
5. If your service technician has not given your system a thorough check-up within the last six (6) months, call them today!

PONDERINGS



It's no secret to anyone that I and my family went through a devastating ordeal beginning precisely six years ago with the failure and FDIC closure of the bank with whom our entire business was financed. As I have moved about our industry in the aftermath of that ordeal in an effort to move on with life, it is that ordeal itself and what people think they know or choose to believe (whether factual or not) that is the proverbial "elephant in the room". I have had enough of the elephant. So here goes...

My last public pondering was some three and a half years ago. It's not like I planned it that way. Life has a way of happening to us with little regard for what we think is fair, right or morally justified. The reality is that "fairness" has nothing to do with it.

Having been raised by God-fearing Christian parents and being a Christian myself, I understood that concept intellectually. I had experienced it on different levels during my life. Of course, those instances paled in comparison in their magnitude. The things I have learned about my Creator, myself, and human nature in general during and since that time is what I collectively refer to as a "heart lesson". I pray for grace that I will not need to be reminded.

Heart lessons happen when things we see or hear and treat as "concepts" become truths. Real truth, experienced in the crucible of life sticks with you. That goes for the good truths as well as the ones we'd rather ignore. Truth does not pick and choose who it impacts, but treats everyone in its path the same. I understand that now. And I understand why.

As a child growing up on the farm, I always looked forward to the end of winter because it meant all kinds of new things were about to happen. It also meant that Dad was going to set fire to the pastures and burn off all the old dead overgrowth from the previous growing season. I remember thinking what a waste it was to burn things down.

As a child I questioned Dad about the need to set fire to the place we loved. He lovingly explained to me that the fire would destroy the bad stuff, and not hurt the good stuff. In time, he said, "everything would be right again." And within a couple of weeks the ugly, charred blackness from the fire was replaced with the lush greenness of new growth that was even

more vibrant than the previous year. I was amazed at how "old things became new again".

"Prescribed burning" occurs each year as countless acres of forestland are purposely set on fire in order to control unwanted vegetation and consume "dead wood" on the forest floor that is the home to an insect known as the "Southern Pine Beetle". Left unchecked they can totally destroy a stand of healthy pine trees in a season. A well-timed, carefully monitored prescribed burn does the trick and ironically, the death that fire deals to the bad stuff (dead wood and unwanted foliage) is the key to vibrant life for the pine forest that remains.

What a great analogy. Heart lessons are like that.

In my case, I had spent my whole life trying to get to the precise point that I was in my career. I was happy. But there's a song by Matt Kearney that has a line that says, *"...I guess we're all one phone call from our knees..."*

There's that truth thing again... That call came, and the fire was set.

The good news is that the fires in my life, regardless of who sets them, are closely tended by a God who loves me and Who has taught me much about Himself and myself in the midst of the flames. I am compelled to share a few of those heart lessons in closing:

- Only one thing can be first. Period.
- I don't have control over anything.
- You see things on your knees you won't see from any other vantage point.
- It really is about me. Just not in the way I thought... Not even close.
- All the "fires" in my life serve a purpose.
- As a spirit, I am unique. As a person, I am not.
- I am not exempt from the "dangerous insects" and "dead wood" of life. No one is.
- But for grace, I am nothing. And I am grateful for grace.

There. Take that, you elephant...

NEWS, LINKS, & DATES TO REMEMBER

Noteworthy News Links:

[Wal-Mart's Push on Animal Welfare Hailed as Game Changer](#)

[Resting is important for dairy cows](#)

[Number of digesters to triple by 2025](#)

[Global milk production registering strong](#)

Industry Organizational Links:

[National Mastitis Council](#)

[National Dairy FARM Program](#)