The Scoop

Spring Forward

I think there is finally light at the end of the tunnel. The bad weather is over and we should start to sail into spring, hopefully. All this weather has really had me thinking about some recent things we should probably talk about. So, take a seat and let's hash them out a bit.

Stretching out forages

At the beginning of the winter, inventories were looking pretty good. In January, we were fine. After February, not so much anymore.The cows increased intakes and now, forage inventories are running pretty tight.

Effective fiber needs to make up at least 25% of the dry matter in the cow's diet-and that may be pushing it a bit. Replacing forage in the diet, can be a little tricky, so stretching out your existing supply makes sense. Here are some feeds to use:

1. Straw and/or corn stalks

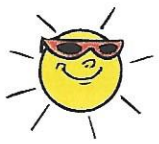
Both can provide some effective fiber, as long as they are chopped fine and mixed in the feed well. Even so, cows aren't crazy about the taste and you may need to add some molasses.

2.Grain byproducts: Corn gluten feed, Wheat midds

As byproducts, much of the starch is removed and what is left is the fiber and protein. You can feed CGF up to 25% of the ration dry matter and midds up to 10 pounds per cow per day.

3. Beet pulp

High in both digestible fiber and sugar, beet pulp can replace some grain as well as forage. You can use up to 10-15 pounds per head dry matter.



4. Soy hulls

High fiber levels and some decent energy make soy hulls a good forage replacement. Use up to 10% of the ration dry matter.

5. Cottonseed

Cottonseed is high in fiber and also high in a slow-release fat. You can use up to 10% of the ration dry matter.

Remember, stretching out the forage in a diet by using replacements is a bit of a balancing act. Get some help if you need to make supplies stretch.

Looking at LPC

In this area, we have a creamery looking closely at LPC counts in milk. LPC or Lab Pasteurization Count is the number of bacteria per ml of milk which survives laboratory

Just in case...

Chances are we might get some winter killed alfalfa this year. Just in case, here are some emergency crops that will provide some tonnage and nutrition.

1. Corn silage

You can feed a lot of corn silage, almost 100% as long as you feed an effective fiber source with it and the starch level isn't too high. The problem is, corn silage won't be ready to harvest until fall.

2. Small grains

Most small grains: oats, rye, barley and triticale are about 15% protein and a high RFQ-when cut at the boot stage.

Adding peas to barley, triticale or oats can add another 3% protein on top of the existing protein level.

3. Forage sorghum, sudan grass or sorghum-sudan

These grasses aren't particularly high in protein-about 13-14% on average, but they are very digestible. Cut when they are between 18 inches and 3 feet-to avoid prussic acid levels and get optimal nutrient value.

4. Clover

Cut at the right maturity, clover can provide a nutrient profile similar to alfalfa.

Clover should be put up wet as it doesn't dry down well for hay. At all.

Odds & Ends.....

Prices heard this week:
Corn: $ per bu. $2.85-3.19
Soybeans: $7.78-8.01 per bu.

150 RFV Hay: Large squares are worth approx. 1.40 per point of RFV.

Springers: $800-850 med grade
Cull cows: $0.44-0.52 per pound
Bull calves: $20-80

Connections:
Call us at 1-800-700-9334 or email us at mctech@centurytel.net to get connected

* Wanted: 6-10 young cows for tiestall barn
* For sale: Jersey heifers, due in the spring
* Wanted: Individual elevated calf pens
* Wanted: Semen tank
* Wanted: 469 silage special round baler
* For sale: Corn silage-perfect for heifers or beef, you haul.
* Wanted: Barn cleaner chain, 17 inch
* For sale: H&S bale wagon
* Wanted: Farm to buy or rent Amery area preferred.
* Wanted: Acerage to buy in Barron county or Dunn county area. Looking for about 400-500 acres.

If you have something to sell or are looking for something-don't hesitate to call or email. There is no charge for the posting.

In winter, I plot and plan. In spring, I move -Henry Rollins

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pasteurization at 145° F for 30 minutes. These thermoduric bacteria in milk include species of Micrococcus, Streptococcus, Lactobacillus, Bacillus, Paenibaccillus and occasionally gram-negative rods. As a guide, 200 is considered good, 100 high-quality, under 10 excellent quality. These bacteria can be hard to find and get rid of. But not impossible. Just get started.

To start, the first thing to do is to have a bulk tank culture taken and find out what level of coliform bacteria is in the milk.

Coliform bacteria like the same conditions as the LPC bacteria. The difference is that coliform bacteria are exclusive to sanitary conditions. In other words, if the LPC high and the coliforms are high, the problem is most likely sanitation. If the LPC is high and the coliforms are low, the problem is most likely equipment.

There are so many places to check, that we developed a check list to go through them all. If you'd like a copy, please contact me at 715-768-0046 and I can send you a copy of the checklist free of charge. You can also download it off our website: monsonconsulting.net. Go to Bottom Line and Info You Can Use to download a free copy.
Currently, LPC counts are not a legal standard in Wisconsin or Minnesota and acceptable counts are determined by your processor.

Twisted stomachs

This has been a cold and snowy winter, and because of that, twisted stomachs may be more of a problem this year.

Dry cows have had a rough month.

If housed outside, dry cows had to use some of their body reserves to keep warm-you just can't feed enough feed to overcome below zero temperatures on a continual basis. The fluuctuations in dry matter and the use of their body reserves set them up for subclinical metabolic problems such as subclinical milk fever and ketosis. Both make the cow sluggish and more susceptible to having a DA.

If housed inside, dry cows this time of year, have a lack of muscle tone.This lack of muscle tone makes it easier for the rumen to twist after the calf is born.

Add to this the freezing and thawing of the feeds they're eating and now there is a real set up for "twisted stomach season".

You can prevent a lot of twisted stomachs, now that you know what is going on. Here are some tips that help:

1. Feed hay before and after calving.
Try and stretch the rumen out and fill it with fiber.

2. If not hay, bump up the chopped straw.
Bump up the chopped straw in the prefresh and the postfresh diet.
Chopped straw, as long as it is chopped fine, will create a good fiber mat and help prevent gas and twisting.

3. Have some good fresh cow protocols in place.
Chances are, even if a cow got the best

THE BUZZ...

Here are some of the latest things going on out there and our personal opinions of them.

Update on herpes virus:

A few years ago, several farms experienced disasters when they fresehened heifers in the winter. Herpes mammillitis ruined the udders and lives of several heifers.

Except for the occasional case, you hardly ever hear about the herpes virus in cattle anymore. Did it go away? Is it just hanging out?

Bovine herpesvirus type 2 is the virus responsible. The virus enters through some type of teat damage like the limited blood flow caused by udder edema.

If the virus can't gain access to the teat, it will sometimes manifest as udder rot. Udder rot is usually a mites problem-but an especially tough one to kill may be the udder rot caused by the virus.

So it seems to be still hanging out. I think we are just doing a better job controlling edema in and preventing teat end damage.

Update on anionic salts:

There is some new research out there that suggests that feeding anionic salts timely can prevent subclinical milk fever. Timely is the key word. A cow needs 9 days of ingesting anionic salts to provide the negative DCAD we're looking for. But what the data also shows is that if anionic salts are fed continuously for over 40 days, it negatively affects breeding by altering the follicular fluid. (Esposito 2018) I'm not sure what level they were feeding for 40 days...will need to explore this further.

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transition diet in the world, due to the cold, she was not consistent in eating the dry matter intake we expected from her. Fresh cow protocols: calcium boluses, Multimin 90, probitics, etc. can help the cow keep eating and prevent twists. Fresh cow protocols are usually unique to each individual farm, so use the one that fits your farm the best.

4. Check for subclinical ketosis

All cows have a slight ketosis right after freshing as they mobilze some of their condition to meet the energy demands of milking. However, if she shows moderate to strong ketosis, it's time to treat-even if she isn't showing clinical symptoms. Subclinical ketosis can make a cow sluggish, reducing her intakes after freshening and making her more susceptible to DAs.

5. Use some yeast

Yeast-before and after freshening-help stabilize an unstable rumen and help the cow get onto feed faster after freshening.

6. Work grain up slowly

If you're topdressing, make sure you work the grain up slowly-take two to three weeks after freshening to work up grain to maximum levels. If the cow is lagging behind on eating forage, too much grain will create too much gas and cause her to twist.

Finally, there isn't much we can do about the freezing and thawing of the feed-other than wait until outdoor temperatures stabilize. Hopefully, that will happen soon.

Immunity & Repro

As long as we're talking about how dry cow intakes varied so much with the weather, we should probably talk on how that affected immunity and reproduction.

Cows are more immunosuppressed around calving than at any time in their lactation. Add to that lowered intakes and the resulting poor nutrition; and the cows may have very low immunity levels right now.

We know lowered immunity increases inflammation and a rash of resulting problems like metritis and mastitis, but it can also effect reproduction performance as well.

In fact, if a cow doesn't recover her immune status fully between breeding and pregnancy diagnosis, it will reduce her reproductive performance.

Progesterone is the essential hormone that allows a cow to remain pregnant. When there isn't an embryo, the corpus luteum regresses and allows a new follicle or egg to ovulate. The luteal-immune cells-the cow's immune system trigger this response in the corpus luteum. It is thought that if the cow's is immune system is low, these immune cells can't trigger the right response. A lot more research is being done in this area. The better we can understand this mechanism, the better we can get cows pregnant and stay pregnant. For now, we do know that cows that are healthy settle better. This year they'll need a little recovery time.

Wow, I'm glad we hashed that all out. Take care and let's talk again soon.