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Dairy guidelines

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Series 350 - May 1969

Using Dairy Herd Improvement Program Results

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Dairy Herd Improvement programs provide important information for member dairymen to use in management decision making. The monthly results, based upon test day milk weights and a determination for fat content of a sample taken at night and morning milkings, provide valuable clues to changes in feeding and management necessary for maximum production from each cow in the herd. Summaries on both the monthly and annual basis establish averages for the herd that are valuable tools for management decision making.

Herd levels of production are usually controlled by the dairyman's managerial ability. Most cows are not permitted to express their full genetic (inherited) ability to produce milk because the herd manager or owner doesn't give her the proper chance (environment) to do so. The most easily recognized "inputs" on a herd basis that restrict the inherited ability of a cow to produce are the kinds, amounts, and nutritional value of the feeds she consumes. Estimates of the weight and net energy furnished by the various feeds fed to DHI program herds are reported each time the herd is tested. Allocating these feeds to the individual cow according to her size and level of production makes it possible to recognize additional feed needs. Computer programs match requirements of the cow for body maintenance and production with the energy intake estimates. Each month each cow in the herd, milking or dry, is carefully considered and a "pounds indicated" of the kind of concentrates (grain) reported fed to the herd is computed as a guide for the dairyman to follow in adjusting her feeding program. On an annual basis, the average amount of the various feeds fed to each cow in the herd is quite closely related to the amount of milk produced.

The accompanying table is a summary, by level of production, for all Virginia official Dairy Herd Improvement program herds completing a test year in 1968. Comparison of the items listed for all levels, between levels, the state average, and most important, the dairyman's own herd average will pinpoint differences in management practices. Virginia herds in 1968 ranged in average production per cow from 4871 lbs. of milk to 20,125 lbs. What did your herd do? Why wasn't it higher?

(By special request, similar information as given in the table is available by breed.)

A SUMMARY, BY LEVEL OF PRODUCTION, OF ALL HERDS IN VIRGINIA'S DHI PROGRAM IN 1968

<u>Range Production</u>	4871	8500	9500	10500	11500	12500	13500	14500	15500	State Average	My Herd
	to 8500	to 9500	to 10500	to 11500	to 12500	to 13500	to 14500	to 15500	to 20125		
No. Herds	32	44	83	128	163	169	141	82	51	893	
Feed Index	114	111	113	113	112	113	112	111	106	112	
Cow Years	73.0	63.7	61.9	62.7	69.6	64.2	68.7	60.6	54.2	64.8	
% Days in Milk	89	85	84	84	85	86	87	86	88	86	
Milk - Lbs.	7683	9143	10053	11027	12033	13013	13973	14990	16587	12394	
Fat - %	4.7	4.5	4.0	3.8	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.6	3.6	3.8	
Fat - Lbs.	360	413	398	421	445	482	514	546	598	467	
Conc. - Cwt.	33	40	41	44	46	49	54	55	59	48	
Conc. - % NE	39	44	44	44	44	45	46	46	47	45	
Silage - Cwt.	137	141	149	149	167	170	169	183	178	163	
Silage - % NE	40	36	38	36	38	37	36	37	35	37	
Hay - Cwt.	12	13	11	14	15	15	15	16	18	14	
Hay - % NE	7	7	6	7	7	7	7	7	8	7	
Pasture - % NE	14	12	13	13	11	12	11	10	10	12	
Pasture Days	171	148	164	172	149	164	174	165	171	163	
Avg. Body Wt.	1040	1100	1180	1200	1240	1250	1280	1290	1320	1200	
Rate Forage Feeding	2.1	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.1	2.2	2.1	2.2	2.2	2.1	
Value Prod.	\$541	\$637	\$649	\$697	\$751	\$803	\$858	\$913	\$984	\$774	
Cost Conc.	\$109	\$137	\$137	\$147	\$152	\$166	\$182	\$192	\$203	\$162	
Total Feed Cost	\$228	\$255	\$258	\$275	\$284	\$307	\$319	\$338	\$353	\$295	
Feed Cost/Cwt. Milk	\$2.98	\$2.80	\$2.57	\$2.49	\$2.36	\$2.36	\$2.28	\$2.26	\$2.13	\$2.38	
Value Prod. over F.C.	\$313	\$382	\$391	\$422	\$467	\$496	\$539	\$575	\$631	\$478	