

Topic of the Month

Preparing for winter

Soon, winter's wrath will be upon us. Along with it will be challenges to maintaining the health of your livestock. Here are some things to consider.

First, to maintain body temperature, animals need energy in the ration or they will burn body stores. This effect is most dramatic in baby calves still on milk that lack a functional rumen. (The fermentation process in the rumen generates heat.) There are two strategies to help maintain body mass. First, add an extra feeding of milk when the average temperature is below 30 degrees. The second strategy is to insulate the calf from the cold. Add extra bedding like straw which the calf can "nest" in. Or, calf blankets are quite effective in helping to hold in body heat. By the way, we have calf blankets for sale.

Second, please recognize that we didn't say to close up the barn tight to trap in the heat. Ventilation is the other big challenge when the temperature drops and the invariable result is respiratory disease if ventilation is inadequate. Increase in humidity allows viruses and bacteria to survive in water droplets suspended in the air.

As a rule of thumb, ventilate the barn to the point that it feels cold, but not so much that the waterers freeze. The thermoneutral point for a functional ruminant is about 40 degrees. That is the temperature at which the animal uses no energy to maintain body temperature, either warm or cool. It may feel cold to us, but the cattle will be comfortable and able to breathe easy.

Commodity Futures

Source: CME

Corn (Dec) as of Oct 30	\$7.42
Soybeans (Dec) Oct 30	\$15.34
Soybean meal ton (Dec) Oct 30	\$476
Cheese Oct 30	\$2.05
Class III milk (Dec) Oct 30	\$20.08
Class III milk (Nov) Oct 30	\$20.97
Class III milk (Oct) Oct 30	\$21.05

Upcoming Events

- Tuesday, Nov. 6 Election Day
- Building a Bridge to Dairy Transition Workshop, Nov 12, 2012, Cost \$50 for up to 5 family members, Central Penn Conference Center, Summerdale PA, for information call the Center for Dairy Excellence 717-346-0849

In The News

Study questions whether organic milk is healthier

Angela Bowman, Dairyherd.com

Paying a hefty price tag for organic milk may leave wallets lighter, but a new clinical report by the American Academy of Pediatrics suggests that it may have no significant health advantages over conventional milk.

In general, milk has the same protein, vitamin, trace mineral content, and lipids from both organically and conventionally reared cows, the report says.

According to the USDA, 187 million pounds of organic milk products were sold in August, up by nearly 10 percent from 2011. This accounted for about 4 percent of total fluid milk sales for the month.

The study did find some benefits from eating organic produce.

Practice News

- Cell phones, whether you love them or hate them are here to stay. They are certainly a convenience and allow instant communication- in most cases. We don't want to discourage anyone from contacting us by cell phone, either voice or text, but be aware that there are times when we are unavailable. If you don't hear back from us in a reasonable amount of time or have an emergency, please call the office line at 814-267-4411.
- November 17-25 Dr. Croushore will be on vacation. Embryo transfer work to be scheduled for him should be scheduled around that vacation.