

May - June 2010

Alliance Spring Nutrition Conferences a Success!

Thanks to the hard work of Dr. Rick Grant and the Feed Alliance Education Committee the spring nutrition conferences in Syracuse and West Lebanon provided timely and useful information to over 200 nutritionists, veterinarians, dairy farmers and students from six states throughout the northeast. A brief synopsis of the presentations is provide below, be sure to visit the Alliance web site at www.northeastalliance.com for complete copies of the talks.

Rumen Protected Amino Acids

Robert Patton of Nittany Dairy Nutrition Inc reviewed research findings and provided general recommendations for consideration of ration balancing adjusting for amino acid make up of feeds. The subtleties of providing for a microbial system with ammonia needs at the same time as meeting the requirements of a mammalian system with specific amino acid requirements lead to complexities in balancing for rumen protected proteins. Patton explained three goals of amino acid balancing:

- Reduce the amount of crude protein in the ration while maintaining milk production in an effort to reduce the amount of nitrogen excreted in urine and manure
- Use of rumen protected amino acids is indicated in early lactation to meet the needs of gluconeogenesis while maintaining body condition score
- Increasing the amount and ratio of rumen protected methionine and lysine in the ration will have a positive impact on the amount of milk protein produced.



Left to right: Mr. Rick Hermonot, Farm Credit East; Dr. Bob Patton, Nittany Dairy Nutrition; Dr. Mike Hutjens, University of Illinois; Dr Joe Hogan, The Ohio State University

As with many aspects of dairy cow nutrition, if the herd's dry matter intake is not known and if the herd average is not above 26,000 pounds of milk, then balancing for amino acids is likely not cost effective.

Nutrition and Mastitis

The interaction between nutrition and mastitis was addressed by Dr. Joe Hogan of Ohio State University following a thorough review of the sources of various mastitis causing organisms in the dairy cow herd. Anti-oxidants, co-enzymes, energy and protein assist cows in combating mastitis causing organisms.

- Anti-oxidants such as Vitamins A and E, beta-carotene, zinc, selenium and chromium assist in warding off host cell damage during immune responses.
- Vitamin E and selenium positively impact the number of antibodies present at the sight of infection.
- Vitamin E and selenium are implicated in reducing the incidence of clinical mastitis.

Lessons Learned from Low Milk Prices

The long term economic impact of management decisions was analyzed by Dr. Mike Hutjens of the University of Illinois.

- Focusing on forage management and ration balancing ranked as the top two priorities of managing during low milk prices.
- Reducing dry matter intake and removing feed additives were ranked as two of the worst actions to take during low milk prices.
- Consider grouping of cows with a single TMR mix.
 - Group young and timid cows separately from older cows
 - Group low somatic cell count cows separately from high somatic cell count cows
 - Group according reproductive status
 - Separate cows with *Staph* infections

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Unleashing the Power in Your Clients' Numbers

Rick Hermonot, a farm business consultant with Farm Credit East provided a simple, yet effective means of assisting clients with analyzing their farm's financial health. Hermonot's approach focuses on several "groupings of fives."

- The five keys of effective focus including vision, priorities, hard work, discipline and passion.
- The five line income statement including gross sales, cost of goods sold, gross margin, overhead and net margin.
- The use of five year pay price averages to reduce the emphasis on highs and lows.
- The five keys to profitability including gross sales, efficiency, capacity, dairy husbandry, and cost control.
- Understanding the "DIRTI 5" of depreciation, interest, repairs, taxes and insurance.



Farm Groups Unify on Greenhouse Gas Regulations

Forty-nine farm groups have joined together in urging the Senate to adopt a resolution that would prevent the Environmental Protection Agency from regulating greenhouse gases under the Clean Air Act without prior congressional approval. Virtually all of American agriculture is united in the belief that regulation of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases should be decided by Congress and not by the EPA. Internationally, the US ranks fourth for CO₂ emissions from agriculture.

According to the EPA's 2005 Inventory of U.S. Greenhouse Emissions, the agricultural sector was responsible for 8.2 percent of total U.S. greenhouse gas emissions. Methane (CH₄) and nitrous oxide (N₂O) were the primary greenhouse gases emitted by agricultural activities. In 2005 CH₄ emissions from enteric fermentation and manure management represented about 27 percent of the total U.S. agricultural CH₄ emissions. Of all domestic animal types, beef and dairy cattle were by far the largest emitters of CH₄. Agricultural soil management activities such as fertilizer application and other cropping practices were the largest source of U.S. N₂O emissions in 2008, accounting for 68 percent. Manure management and field burning of agricultural residues were also small sources of N₂O emissions.

When livestock or poultry manure are stored or treated in systems that promote anaerobic conditions (e.g., as a liquid/slurry in lagoons, ponds, tanks, or pits), the decomposition of materials in the manure tends to produce CH₄. When manure is handled as a solid (e.g., in stacks or drylots) or deposited on pasture, range, or paddock lands, it tends to decompose aerobically and produce little or no CH₄. Ambient temperature, moisture, and manure storage or residency time affect the amount of CH₄ produced because they influence the growth of the bacteria responsible for CH₄ formation. For non-liquid-based manure systems, moist conditions (which are a function of rainfall and humidity) can promote CH₄ production. Manure composition, which varies by animal diet, growth rate, and type, including the animal's digestive system, also affects the amount of CH₄ produced. In general, the greater the energy content of the feed, the greater the potential for CH₄ emissions. However, some higher energy feeds also are more digestible than lower quality forages, which can result in less overall waste excreted from the animal.

Many farm groups are concerned that EPA regulation of agriculturally derived green house gases will lead to increased input costs and costly regulations for farmers and ranchers. The Senate is expected to vote soon on the resolution introduced by Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska) that will effectively veto the EPA's scheme to regulate carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases as pollutants.

In a letter sent to members of the Senate recently, the broad coalition of agricultural groups, representing crop and livestock producers and allied industries, explained that without relief from Congress, agriculture could suffer severe economic impacts from the EPA's plan to regulate stationary sources of greenhouse gas emissions.



Monitoring greenhouse gases at Russell Ranch.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions – continued ...

Table 1. U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emission by Economic Sector (2005) (percent)

Sector	Percent
Electric power industry	33.5%
Transportation	27.7
Industry	18.6
Agriculture	8.2
Commercial	5.9
Residential	5.2
Other	.8
Total	100.0%

Source: EPA, U.S. Inventory of Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sink (1990 – 2005), Trends in Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Table 2-14.

Table 2. U.S. Agricultural Greenhouse Gas Emissions by Source (2005) (percent)

Source	Percent of	
	Total Emissions	Agricultural Emissions
Agricultural soil management	5.0%	61%
Enteric fermentation	1.5	18
Manure management	.7	9
CO ₂ from fossil fuel consumption	.6	7
Other	.3	4
Total	8.2%	100%

Source: EPA, U.S. Inventory of Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks (1990 – 2005), Trends in Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Table 2-14.

Regulation of stationary sources of greenhouse gas emissions will begin on Jan. 2, 2011, when these sources will be affected through such programs as Prevention of Significant Deterioration (PSD) and Title V operating permits.

While EPA has indicated it will start regulating larger emitters in excess of 50,000 tons annually, it does not have the discretion not to regulate smaller emitters. Only Congress can address that question, and existing provisions of the Clean Air Act put these levels at 100 and 250 tons of emissions annually, according to the agricultural groups. The letter states that according to EPA's own estimates, full implementation "would cost farmers (more than) \$866 million" just to obtain Title V operating permits for their farms and livestock operations.

Many farm groups are concerned that farmers and ranchers will likely incur increased input costs because of the regulatory impacts and agricultural producers will eventually be directly regulated.

Sources: 2010 U.S. Greenhouse Gas Inventory Report, Local Foods Research: Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Agriculture. EPA, U.S. Inventory of Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks (1990-2005, <http://www.fb.org> (American Farm Bureau Newsroom))

EPA, Enviro's Settle on CAFO Permits

EPA and environmentalists have signed a long-awaited settlement that opens the door to the agency significantly expanding the universe of concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) that will be required to seek clean water discharge permits, prompting early concerns from industry over its economic impacts. The May 25 settlement, which ends litigation over EPA's 2008 CAFO rule, requires the agency to issue already-crafted draft guidance on when CAFOs have a "duty" to seek permits, a controversial topic that industry says is moot because a federal appellate court ruled in 2005 that CAFOs have no duty to seek permits.

The Environmental Protection Agency has reached an agreement with anti-farm groups such as the NRDC, the Sierra Club and Waterkeeper Alliance regarding farms designated as CAFOs. While details on this announcement are not yet available, these reports indicate that as part of the settlement, EPA will be issuing new regulations requiring all large CAFOs (including unpermitted large farms) to report information to EPA/DEC. Throughout most northeastern states pro-active steps by state regulators already require water quality provisions for CAFOs through a variety of permitting steps. While clear guidance from EPA is needed, most farms should be in compliance with federal requirements if they have been working with state regulatory authorities.

EPA had not released the guidance by press time and shows no indication of issuing a press release on the issue. It is believed that the guidance will address data collection on CAFOs to determine if they have a "duty to apply" for national discharge permits under the CAFO rule. The effects of EPA's new guidance and future rulemaking, both of which were required in the newly announced settlement agreement, could mean that more CAFOs will be required to obtain permits, particularly in states where few permits have been issued. The May28, 2010 issue of *Brownfields: Ag News for America* states that reports out of northwest Iowa this spring indicate that the EPA has stepped up its investigations of cattle feeding operations, particularly those feedlots of one-thousand head or less.

In a statement, the National Pork Producers Council (NPPC) expressed "deep frustration and anger" over the settlement agreement between EPA and three environmental groups: the Natural Resources Defense Council, Sierra Club and Waterkeepers Alliance. "This agreement sets the stage for new Clean Water Act permitting measures that will add to producers' costs, drive more farmers out of business, increase concentration in livestock production to comply and hurt rural economies," Randy Spronk, a Minnesota pork producer who heads NPPC's environmental committee, said in an NPPC statement issued May 27.

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We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.northeastalliance.com

Fourth Annual "Golf for Good Works" Registration & Sponsorships Ending Soon!



"Golf for Good Works"! This year's tournament is scheduled for Friday, June 25th at the Turning Stone Casino Resort. What better way to spend a beautiful June morning than to play golf at the Kaluhyat Golf Club with your friends and colleagues, and raise needed funds for important agricultural education programs.

Registration brochures have been mailed to you and are also available on our website. Our on-line registration system is now open!

For more information on registration and sponsorship opportunities, check out our website at: www.northeastalliance.com

Don't delay!

The deadline to register and/or sponsor is Friday, June 11th!



**Friday, June 25, 2010
Turning Stone Casino Resort ∞ Verona, NY**

NEAFA Calendar of Events

AFIA Feed Industry Institute

June 14-17, 2010
St. Louis, Missouri

NEAFA Annual "Golf for Good Works" Tournament

June 25, 2010
Turning Stone Casino Resort
Verona, New York

Safety, Health and Environmental Quality Conference (by NGFA)

July 28-29, 2010
Hilton Omaha
Omaha, Nebraska

VT Feed Dealers Annual Conference

September 22-23, 2010
Double Tree Conference Center
South Burlington, Vermont

Save the Date! Vermont Feed Dealers Annual Conference!

Mark your calendars for the Vermont Feed Dealers Annual Conference to be held at the Double Tree Conference Center in South Burlington. The event kicks off with a golf tournament on Wednesday, September 22 followed by a dairy industry reception that evening and a conference on Thursday, September 23. Watch for details in upcoming newsletters!