



## MAY 2018 NEWSLETTER

Well, it is not very often that the heat abatement systems in most barns have been running at full force before much (or any) of the corn is in the ground! The good news is that all the fans will have been running and serviced before the birds start nesting in them. If the recent couple of hot days are any indication of what the summer is going to be like the cows will need all the cooling options you can provide them. A long hot summer may 'help' address the excess of butterfat in the market place right now.

Included below is information about the National Mastitis Council (NMC) regional meeting happening in Guelph in conjunction with the Ontario Association of Bovine Practitioners this June. The NMC is a global organization for mastitis control and milk quality and serves as an excellent resource for new research into dealing with an economically important issue on every dairy. If you have a chance to take in the sessions (open to all producers and industry partners) we recommend it. There will be tours of the Elora dairy research station and short courses on milking equipment, records analysis and culturing.



[www.nmconline.org](http://www.nmconline.org)

Regional meeting details and registration links - <http://oabp.ca/nmc-regional-meeting/>

Transition cow management is always important regardless of market pressures and blend price swings. Specifically there has been much talk about hypocalcaemia and the routine use of oral calcium supplementation as a preventative measure along with the inclusion of calcium binding agents in the close up rations. There continues to be studies released about what is the most economical and effective way to handle this disease.

Most producers are comfortable feeding a high fibre, low energy, low potassium dry cow ration either as a single or a 2 group formulation. Use of blanket oral calcium therapy for 2nd+ calvers has greatly reduced the number of cows exhibiting of clinical signs of milk fever. These cows may still suffer

from sub clinical hypocalcaemia in the days following treatment but as appetite and milk production increase they do not warrant further treatment. The use of calcium binders has shown a significant reduction of clinical signs of milk fever however, these agents still need much more research to explore the economics of this strategy. There is no doubt that the addition of a true dietary cation-anion difference (DCAD) formulation will help the cow handle the swings in calcium demand on her own. This is usually accomplished by using low potassium forages and other feedstuffs along with adding anionic supplements. Historically the biggest drawback of this diet has always been a reduction in intakes although improvements in palatability have occurred. Older cows especially have shown more milk produced (2-3.5kgs) on DCAD diets along with the reduction of clinical signs. As with all the diets on farm close attention needs to be paid to moisture, mixture, particle size and delivery. This is especially important as intakes need to stay above 11.5kg DM per day for close up cows to ensure proper consumption is occurring. Supplementation of calcium and magnesium has shown benefit to most close up dry cow rations and with DCAD rations it is essential.

With proper intake on a DCAD diet the cows own hormonal regulation of calcium will see her through the changes in calcium demand immediately after calving. Addition of calcium and magnesium is needed for absorption from the gut. The other aspect of these diets that is extremely important is the level of metabolizable protein. The one group goldilocks diet has shown a dramatic reduction of disease rates using a combination of high fibre and low energy but often misses a level of protein that is needed for colostrum production and tissue repair around calving. Health benefits of the goldilocks diet when done properly are proven but some production is given up to achieve this. Several producers have kept the forage base of a one group ration but split the cows into a far off and close up group. The close up diet has the 'goodies' added to it to maintain the health benefits and improve the early fresh milk production.

Transition cow management is a key economic driver on the dairy farm and special attention needs to be given to the many details important to be successful in this area. Set up a quick meeting with your veterinarian and nutritionist to utilize your team to come up with a plan for transition success.