

Cow Feeds

One of the primary keys to a successful dairy operation is a good nutrition program. Not only is nutrition one of the highest input costs (about 50% of the total costs), but it also controls the results of milk production, reproduction and health.

When you rear animals, you should also feed them. Cows feed on a number of plants: grass, corn or grain, among others. You can buy these feeds or, better yet, you can choose to grow them right next to your dairy farm. You can save up that way, and you can also make another business: selling off the feeds that you have extra from feeding your cows. You can also grow corn for your own consumption.

It is also possible to influence the milk composition through the feeding. As the cow normally experiences a shortage of nutrients in early lactation, it is of importance to feed the cow a well balanced diet in order to maximise the dry matter intake. An unbalanced diet increases the risk for metabolic disturbances and weight loss, which have a negative effect on the milk yield. Healthy cows will also make the transition from dry to peak easier.

Lecture 8

Dairy farms

Dairy farms are farms where cows are raised to make milk and milk products like cheese, ice cream and butter. When establishing a dairy farm, constructions should be made in such a way to allow the following:

1. Cleaning and sanitizing to get rid of germs of the hoses, connections, and pipes that the milk flows through.

2. Feeding the cows.

3. Milking the cows. Once the machines are turned on, the milk goes through tubes until it reaches a big milk jar. It is checked to be sure the milk is good and then it goes into the bulk tank where it waits for the milk truck to come and haul it away. The milk truck will take the milk to a dairy, where it will be pasteurized and homogenized for health safety.

4. The big bottle is checked all the time to make sure that the milk doesn't have anything bad in it. It goes into a big tank where a tube of milk is taken out by the milk hauler so that they can test it when they get to the dairy.

The farmer's may also included:

1. Taking the cows out to the exercise yard in warmer weather and then cleaning their stalls. In colder months, the cows stay in and they have to clean the stalls around the cows.

2. Taking care of the animals: checking bruises, wounds, hooves--just seeing that the cow is healthy.

3. Feeding and taking care of the young calves. [Bottle feeding for the new ones, a bucket of milk for the older ones.]

4. Taking care of the crops when the weather is warmer. [Sowing, growing, harvesting]. Checking out the feed that is stored in silos and grain bins; doing maintenance on equipment. To lower food costs, the dairy farmer grows part of the food for the cows.

5. Sanitizing the hoses, connections, and pipes again.

6. Milking the cows again around 4:00 p.m.

7. Checking milk to be sure that the butterfat content is right and that there isn't anything wrong with the milk so that the hauler can come to get it.

8. Feeding cows.

Common Management Practices Recommended for Dairying

Farmers should use modern and well established scientific principles, practices and skills should be used to obtain maximum economic benefits from dairy farming. Some of the major norms and recommended practices in when establishing dairy housing is as follows:

1. Construct shed on dry, properly raised ground.
2. Avoid water-logging, marshy and heavy rainfall areas.
3. The walls of the sheds should be 1.5 to 2 meters high.
4. The walls should be plastered to make them damp proof.
5. The roof should be 3 - 4 metres high.
6. The cattle shed should be well ventilated.
7. The floor should be hard, even non-slippery and drained to keep dry and clean.
8. A standing space of 2 x 1.05 metre for each animal is needed.
9. The manger space should be 1.05m high, 0.5m and depth of 0.25 m.
10. Corners in mangers, troughs, drains and walls should be rounded for easy cleaning.
11. Provide 5-10 sq. metre loaf space for each animal.
12. Provide proper shade and cool drinking water in the dry season
13. In cold weathers, keep animals indoor during night and rain.
14. Provide individual bedding daily.
15. Maintain sanitary condition around shed.
16. Control external parasites (ticks, flies etc.) by spraying the pens and sheds
17. Drain urine into collection pits and then to the field through irrigation channels.
18. Dispose of dung and urine properly.
19. Give adequate space for the animals.

Moreover, Dairy industries in European, American, and Asian nations evolved over time, focusing on improving indigenous potentials. Dairy industries improved hand in hand with industrialization. Industrialization improved nutritional and health conditions of animals: well-

fed animals increasingly expressed their genetic potentials and responded well to breeding objectives. This produced high quality animals and high milk output, and thus overall milk processing achieved high standards in Europe, America, and Asia.

The example of these countries shows that as feeding of animals was improved, milk yield increased. Abundant grain production brought about by industrialization and mechanization made the feeding of grains to animals economical. With good feeding and healthcare, animal breeding produced cattle breeds with higher milk yield. All these are a result of the use of knowledge in production.

The Nigerian experience has been characterized by indiscriminate importation of foreign animals, poor feeding, high incidence of diseases, loss of animals, and failure of programs. Apparently, Nigeria is disregarding the lessons of history, the necessary and scientific sequence in the development of the dairy industry, and adopting passive technology transfer as a strategy for developing the dairy industry. This explains the failure of Nigeria's industrialization endeavour. This also explains the failure of dairy development programs in South-western Nigeria.