

JULY 2018

It is nice to see the weather closer to “the norm” than what we saw last year and in the many years prior. With the late June rains being pretty widespread across Ontario our crops look like they’re off and running well and posed to get through that first drought sensitive stage in their phases of maturation into a good crop. That said, many areas of Midwestern Ontario would welcome more rain soon!

The cash hog market is at the highest level in a year, but there are ominous clouds already taking this market down. The ongoing trade dispute between the US and both China and Mexico, portends to negatively impact North American pork producers. It’s sad to see how American politics can affect so many people in a negative way. Hopefully, cooler, more logical heads will prevail as these things get sorted out.

Jeff Buchanan

Commodities

While stability was the predominant theme with respect to commodities in May, June has returned to a period of volatility. Corn was down \$9, soymeal was down a whopping \$42 and soft red wheat was down \$8. The CDN dollar was not immune in that over a period of less than 3 weeks, it shed almost 2.6 cents versus the USD. This has a significant effect on Canadian basis levels. The two primary reasons for the above are the escalated rhetoric relating to the potential global trade wars and the very favorable weather in the U.S. Indications are that both Corn and Soybeans are looking very, very good in the respective U.S. growing regions.

Looking forward, let’s hope the Trade War threats don’t continue to escalate. To reiterate something from last month’s newsletter, there are very few winners when mutually beneficial trade is abandoned.

The Dairy Team

Building a Strong Foundation

SAVE THE DATE

Molesworth Calf Workshop “*The First 60 Days*”

When: Wednesday, July 18, 11:00 am-2:30 pm

Where: Brendan Diefenbacher, 8669 Concession 3, Listowel

Speakers: Dr. Tom Gutteridge, Dr. Kristen Edwards, Brittany Todd.

Topics: colostrum testing, sanitation, scours

Calves are often referred to as the most essential part of the whole dairy operation and the foundation of a successful farm. Join us for a very informative workshop and have lunch on us!!

Much like building a house on a good, solid foundation, calf raising is the beginning or “foundation” of a productive cow’s life. Failure to build this foundation can lead to struggles and inefficiencies for years to come. This is the first in a series of articles dealing with calves and tips on raising a healthy, happy calf.

The start of the building of a healthy calf is the feeding of colostrum, sometimes referred to as “liquid gold”. Colostrum is an important source of immunoglobulins (Ig) or antibodies that the calf needs for passive immunity and it is also an important source of nutrients.

It is important to remember the following when feeding colostrum:

- Quickness - How quickly the calf receives colostrum after birth. If a calf has not received any colostrum within 12 hr of birth, it is unlikely to be able to absorb enough antibodies to have adequate immunity. It is for this reason that a calf should receive the first feeding of colostrum within 1 hr after birth when possible.
- Quantity - How much colostrum the calf receives. Typically for a Holstein calf 4 L of colostrum within 1 hr and 2-3 L in the next 8 hr.
- Quality - The concentration of immunoglobulins in the colostrum. Tested by a refractometer, the immunoglobulin content in the first "milking" colostrum is typically 5%-6% (50-60 g/L) but can range from 2% to 15%.
- Cleanliness - The levels of pathogens in the colostrum. This can be a challenge to keep the colostrum free from pathogens such as E.coli, Johnes and salmonella. Clean udders, milking equipment, maternity pens and calf-feeding equipment are all very important.

Jan Morris

How to Avoid Ticks

Last month's article dealt with tick bites and Lyme Disease. While the probability is low, it is possible to encounter an infected tick almost anywhere in Ontario. This month, we'll look at how workers can try to reduce the chance of tick bites even further.

1. Wear light-coloured clothing (so you can see ticks more easily).
2. Wear long-sleeved shirts and pants. Wear closed footwear and tuck pant legs inside socks.
3. Use insect repellent containing DEET or Icaridin on exposed skin and clothes. (Read label before using).
4. Avoid bushy areas and long grass if you can.
5. Immediately after outdoor work do a "body inspection". Pay close attention to areas such as scalp, ankles, armpits, groin, navel and behind your ears and knees. Get someone to check the back of your body or use a mirror.
6. Shower soon after being outside to wash off a tick that may not be attached.
7. Put your clothes in the dryer on HIGH for an hour to kill any ticks.
8. Wear gloves when handling dead animals.
9. If you find ticks, make sure other workers or family members can be on guard and check themselves. Prompt removal of attached ticks (within 24 hours) can decrease the risk of infection.

Jason Elg

Feed (Energy) Intake Factors

There are many factors that influence a pig's or sow's feed intake. The obvious one that comes to mind is temperature – intakes are probably down currently compared to historical levels. Notwithstanding the heat, there are many other factors that impact feed intake. The ration itself can influence feed (energy) intake – a pig will eat less of a high energy feed than a lower energy feed.

There are 2 factors at play here within the pig – gut fill and the animal's energy requirement. Feeder settings, genetics, health status and water intake are a few examples of things other than the actual feed that can all play a significant role in determining feed intake in a barn. If you feel there is room for improvement in your barns – or if you need benchmark figures to compare to – let's have a conversation. Together we can pinpoint what areas to focus on – the feed itself or other factors.

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Typical of every summer, we have our long weekends to work around – please mark your calendar for Monday, August 6th. Our mill will be closed in celebration of Civic Holiday. Thank you in advance for your cooperation in planning your feed deliveries around this holiday.

Enjoy the beautiful summer weather. Thanks for your continued support.

Sincerely,

Ron

"If you keep saying things are going to be bad, you have a chance of being a prophet."