

Quick Tips When Managing Dry Dairy Cows



By Donna M. Amaral-Phillips

- Dry cows subject to heat stress during the dry period give less milk this next lactation and their calves and grand-calves give less milk! Also, heat stress impacts immunity of the calf born to the heat-stressed dam. Ideally, these cows should be under fans in a barn, but rotation of shade trees may help.
- Dry cows are most susceptible to mastitis 2 weeks after dry off and then 2 weeks before calving. Thus, decreasing mud and preventing dry cows from congregation around a shade tree are important, especially at these time points. Some of the highest bacterial counts in the cow's environment have been observed during the summer versus other times of the year.
- Dry cows should be fed a diet that provides adequate, but not excessive, amounts of energy. Thus, diets should contain 0.60 to 0.62 Mcals NEL/lb dry matter. Body condition should be maintained so that these cows calve in a body condition score of 3.0 to 3.25. Feeding excessive amounts of energy has been shown to increase fresh cow problems and, in today's financial situation, wastes financial resources.
- If you are vaccinating dry cows to prevent diseases in the calf or to decrease the severity of environmental mastitis (*E.coli*), make sure to provide all of the boosters needed so that these vaccines will provide the protection expected.

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