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TOP NEWS OF THE MONTH

Is Shrink costing you?



Mentors play a crucial role in professional and personal development, aiding in understanding differential shrink among grain and by-product ingredients. They provide valuable information, such as data from The Professional Animal Scientist, which includes a table on shrink risk for various ingredients

<https://hoards.com/article-36219-feed-shrink-feedback.html>

The dry cow group has an effect on the whole farm.



Calving is a stage that needs to be managed in dairy farms to ensure a cow's entire lactation. Best practices for transitioning a cow from far-off fresh to her lactation group include ensuring the pen isn't overcrowded, maintaining a low-energy diet, and providing ample bunk space. Pre-fresh cows should have good ventilation and be handled calmly. Group calving is crucial, with most farms using a calving pen. Management of the group calving pen is also important, as it can impact the cattle's overall health.

Timely protocols around calving are crucial, with employees needing to know when to hold back and assist the cow. Colostrum collection is also important, as frozen colostrum lacks white blood cells that can help prevent disease. The sooner a cow is moved into her lactation group, the better, as it has social benefits and consumes more dry matter. The use of artificial intelligence (AI) in large dairy herds is an adopted trend, but its effectiveness depends on milk production and daily observation of the herd.

<https://www.agproud.com/articles/59216-what-happens-in-the-dry-cow-group-impacts-the-whole-dairy>



Upcoming Events:

Dairy Seminar:
Mar 4-Mar 7

Heifers- Can we train them?

<https://hoards.com/article-36094-the-first-milking-can-be-easier.html>



Milking fresh heifers can be a stressful and hazardous experience for both milking technicians and cattle. To improve the initial milking experience, dairy leaders should set up for success by pretraining springing heifers, grouping fresh heifers and fresh cows together, and using pheromones to modify animal behavior responses to stressful situations.

New advances in pheromones, particularly bovine maternal appeasement substance, have shown positive results in modifying animal behavior responses to stressful situations. Anti-kick devices may have a place in protecting human safety, but they should be used in rare instances only and as a last resort when other strategies have proven unsuccessful first.



WORK WITH THE ATHLETE- SHE NEEDS COACHING

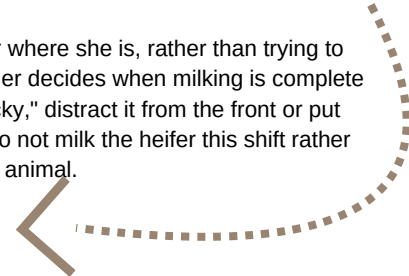
Dairy leadership should help people help heifers by investing in animal handling training. This training should focus on what to do when the situation gets challenging, such as asking for help and who to contact when help is required. Milkers should know how to be emotionally aware and realize when the situation is escalating, as well as what "outs" may exist to de-escalate both themselves and the animal(s).

If a heifer improperly loads into the parlor, it is okay to milk her where she is, rather than trying to back her out or force her to move. Teach milkers that the detacher decides when milking is complete and not milk heifers on "manual mode." If an animal is too "kicky," distract it from the front or put hobbles on. If all else fails, milkers should know that it is okay to not milk the heifer this shift rather than risking an injury to them or the animal.

LESS IS MORE!

Owners and managers should be vigilant for improper use of routine items, such as cloth towels, and correct slippery slope behaviors. Handling aids should be chosen that make proper behaviors easy and bad behaviors hard. Fresh animals are harder to handle and require additional procedures beyond normal milking protocols. To ease the stress of fresh heifer milking, ample time should be given to do the job right based on desired animal handling principles.

Additional labor is needed for the parlor while milking fresh pens to condition them to proper etiquette more consistently and improve the milking experience for them. Adding a manager who can be a calming influence and trusted to make decisions in challenging situations can help management appreciate the challenges the team faces. Monitoring and treating fresh cattle can also help assess udder fill and texture before their normal checks and observe the animals from a different perspective.



WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR YOU?

Dairies that seek to enhance the dynamics of how fresh heifers are brought into the milking string have a competitive advantage in production, milk quality, and return on labor investment. In this dairy economy, both personnel and animals are nearly irreplaceable resources. To succeed, one must trust that a better outcome is possible and be prepared to find ways to make that belief a reality.

