

Consider a TMR

Total mixed rations (TMRs) are being used by more dairy farmers today than ever before. This trend will continue because of the many advantages TMRs provide the modern ration. There are even more reasons this year (with impending drought and higher feed prices) to use a TMR to feed the dairy herd.

There are many advantages to using a TMR when feeding dairy cows:

- 1 All feeds can be uniformly mixed together resulting in cows consuming a consistent ration.
- 2 Bulky feeds such as cottonseed can easily be used in the ration with a TMR.
- 3 Wet feeds can be used in a TMR.
- 4 Most TMR mixers can handle hay which will help assure adequate fiber is provided to the cow.
- 5 Use of a TMR in place of parlor feeding will help avoid slug feeding.
- 6 If cows are grouped, costlier feeds can be used for the higher producing cows and lower quality and less expensive feeds can be fed to lower producing cows.
- 7 TMRs can also be fed to heifers and dry cows.

There are some concerns with TMRs:

- 1 Sorting can be a problem.
- 2 Over mixing (especially in a vertical mixer) will lead to less effective fiber which can result in low butterfat and possible stomach problems such as displaced abomasums.
- 3 There is a need for extra storage if using commodities.
- 4 Cows with long lactations can become fat.

Advantages that have been observed from feeding a properly balanced TMR:

- 1 Healthier cows
- 2 More production
- 3 Higher butterfat
- 4 Less feet problems
- 5 Lower feed costs
- 6 Less labor

The general consensus is cows may not peak as high in milk but are more persistent when fed a TMR versus grain in the parlor or a computer feeder. However, I have worked with cows that have peaked at over 200 pounds of milk on a TMR.

I have had personal experience with dozens of herds that have switched to TMRs. Almost all have seen increased milk production, with increases ranging from 3-4 pounds up to 10-12 pounds of milk per cow per day.

There are even more reasons this year (with impending drought and higher feed prices) to use a TMR to feed the dairy herd. The ability to incorporate any type of feed into the TMR offers many advantages:

- 1 Poor quality forages (rough hay, corn silage with little or no grain, dry corn silage) can be utilized more successfully when fed in a TMR with more palatable feeds (or wetter feeds or even water).
- 2 Forages can be “stretched” more easily with a TMR ration by using many of the ethanol or alcohol byproduct feeds such as wet distiller’s grain or wet corn gluten feed.
- 3 Any type of bulky byproduct feed, such as cottonseed, can be feed.
- 4 High moisture ear corn, which is a great way to increase potential corn grain yields 30-40%, can easily be fed in a TMR.

Alternatives to Increased Feeding Cost

An opportunity has been suggested for promoting the use of Total Mixed Rations (TMR) to producers. The idea is to work with regional equipment dealers that would be willing to rent TMR mixers to producers for 1 - 2 months to incorporate a TMR into their feeding program. KDDC Consultants would offer a list of nutritionist that would be willing to work with the producer for a reduced rate or fee during the trial time to make sure the producer has a balanced ration. This also would promote the use of commodities and other feedstuff to the producer, reducing feed input cost, along with the utilization of a nutritionist. Timing on this endeavor is excellent considering the present milk price to feed ratio. KDDC Dairy Consultants would not be recommending specific people or organizations, but would be offering the list or contact information for participating entities to producers.

KDDC welcomes any Producers and KDDC Allied Industry Members to participate in this program.
Present Participants:

Nutritionist – Associated Organization

Donna Amaral-Phillips	UK Dairy Nutritionist
Dan Riddell	SE Dairy Consultants
Darrell D. Johnson	Burkman Feeds
Gary Lane	Burkman Feeds
Ron Wendlandt	Kentucky Nutrition
Bill Tucker	Bagdad Roller Mills
Ken McGuffey	CPC Commodities, LLC

Equipment - Dealers

Gordon Jones	Stockyard Farm & Dairy
Timothy Diller	Diller Equipment
David Taul	Taul Equipment
Sam Lawson	Hartland Equipment

Commodity

Pete Miller	Grain Processing Company
Ken McGuffey	CPC Commodities, LLC

If this would be of interest to you, or you know others that would be interested please contact the KDDC Consultant in your area or Roger Thomas: email kddc@kydairy.org or call 859-516-1129. If you are not a member of KDDC and wish to participate in this opportunity please contact a KDDC consultant or Roger Thomas.

Consultant Contact Information:

Matthew H. Hayes Area: Southeast KY
382 Whitehead Cemetery Road
Brodhead, KY 40409
Cell: 859-516-1966
Email: mhayes_kddc@windstream.net

Denise Jones Area: Central KY
177 George Beaven Rd.
Loretto, KY 40037
Phone: 859-516-1619
Email: djoneskddc@hotmail.com

David Roberts Area: Western KY
1334 Carrsville Rd
Hampton, KY 42047
859-516-1409
Email: kddcroberts@tds.net

Maury Cox, KDIP Director Area: NC & NE KY
2148 Tim Tam Drive
Shelbyville, KY 40065
502-298-1864
Email: maury.cox@insightbb.com