

It's Sugar time

One of the frequent comments that we have heard from our dairy customers is that the cows are producing less milk than they did last year. Furthermore, many dairyman and nutritionists have commented that they believe that the corn crop from 2013 contains less of the nutrients that produce milk as compared to the 2012 corn crop.

We have had several dairies add a molasses blend to their ration this year in an effort to increase milk production and milk components. In most cases, they are replacing a portion of the starch from corn with sugar from molasses. Sugars are more fermentable and available in the rumen as compared with corn. This can result in the capture by rumen microbes of additional ammonia to produce bacterial protein and produce more rumen volatile fatty acids (VFA) as energy sources. By reducing corn and adding molasses we can accomplish several other good benefits. Molasses has less of a depressing effect on rumen pH and a higher pH is beneficial to a well-functioning rumen. In addition, molasses reduces sorting and encourages fiber intake. Sugar has been shown to increase the volatile fatty acid named butyrate and this can result in a higher butterfat content. In a number of rations, cows also experienced an increase in milk protein. In addition, molasses can increase dry matter intake and overall fiber digestibility.

In the previous paragraph we listed several nutritional advantages that benefit dairy cows. By achieving even a portion of these benefits, the dairyman can improve the profitability of the dairy. Increases in milk components or milk production translates into a larger milk check.

If you would like to consider feeding a molasses blend to your dairy cows than contact us. We can provide complete nutrition profiles for all of our blends that can be used by nutritionists to balance rations. Interestingly, the last printing of the National Research Council's (NRC) recommendations states that sugar is now recognized as a required nutrient for dairy cows. Cobb Shipping will provide tanks and all equipment needed to add molasses to your total mixed ration. It's time to consider sugar! Call 608-778-8788 or 608-943-8008 for more information.