

Topic of the Month

Practice News

Teat Health

Winter is a challenging time for exposed skin. We feel our hands, lips, and faces get chapped and windburned. But let's not forget about our cattle. We need to be proactive about protecting what has been called the most important piece of real estate on the farm- the teat end.

There are several aspects to ensuring the health of a dairy cows teats, but it is important because damaged teats harbor bacteria, are difficult to clean, and can be very painful. Most teat dips contain an agent to kill bacteria and some sort of emollient or conditioner to protect the skin. There are winter teat dips that may cost more up front but provide better protection. Regardless of which option you choose, there are several things to keep in mind.

First, teats need to be dry. Some dips may be slower drying and they may be good to avoid in the cold winter months. If you continue using your regular dip over winter, you should not dry the entire teat because you will remove the dip but you should wipe any drop of teat dip off the teat end. This will help prevent evaporative cooling.

Second, we should take steps to avoid challenges to the teat end. Ensure that the cattle are not exposed to wind, that their bedding is clean and dry, and that they do not walk through areas where water or manure will splash up on their udders.

Teat end health may seem like a small thing but given the high costs of mastitis and the pain and difficulty of treating chapped teats, choosing a proper dip and taking measures to protect teats should be a high priority for producers.

- Effective immediately, we will be discontinuing use of the answering service for after hours calls. Calls to the office phone outside of normal business hours will be forwarded to the phone of the veterinarian on call.

In The News

- In January, the Coca-Cola Company, which previously owned 42.5% of fairlife LLC, acquired the remaining stake. Coca-Cola now owns fairlife LLC in its entirety. Financial terms were not disclosed.
- Borden, the Dallas-based dairy company with a heavy focus in the Southeast, has filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection. The company blamed rising costs, decreasing prices, and changing tastes. Chief executive Tony Sarsam indicated that when the company will be able to emerge from the bankruptcy in better shape. Borden employs 3,300 people.
- The Department of Justice is investigating anti-trust concerns resulting from the proposed merger of Dean Foods, which filed for bankruptcy last year, and DFA. If a merger is approved, it would result in control of a huge portion of milk sales and processing. For instance, a merger would allow the company to control 60% of fluid milk sales in the Upper Midwest. DFA and Dean's were investigated by DOJ in the early 2000s, but no charges were filed.

Commodity Futures

Prices

As of January 31, 2020

Corn	\$3.81/bu
Soybean Meal	\$291.00/ton
Milk (Class III)	\$17.04/cwt
Beef (Live cattle)	\$121.36/cwt

Upcoming Events

- Penn State extension, in coordination with Somerset Trust, will be putting on a meeting for dairy producers on March 12 at the Berlin Fire Hall. The meeting will focus on opportunities in dairy. More information will be available in the near future.