

23rd Annual Dairy Day to be held at Elk Lake High School

The 23rd annual Susquehanna County Dairy Day will take place on Friday, March 2, at Elk Lake High School, Di-

mock, PA. Dairy Day is organized by Penn State Cooperative Extension in Susquehanna County and the Dairy Day Committee.

The event kicks off at 10 a.m. and concludes by 3:30 p.m. Dairy Day will be filled with educational presentations, free

health screenings, commercial exhibitors, lunch, and a well stocked dairy bar; which includes milk, cheese,

and ice cream. Last but certainly not least, plan to join us at 2 p.m. for the famous pie baking contest and auction.

credit workshops offered in both the morning and afternoon, presented by Dave Messersmith, Penn State Extension Wayne

Educational workshops will be available throughout the day. Topics will include pesticide

County. The PA Department of Environment Protection Agency and Dairy Day 85

Winter from B3

haylage results tended to be drier, higher in lignin and lower in fiber digestibility than 2010. This fits the scenario of larger plant stems, more structural fiber and later harvest due to a wet spring. These forages will likely result in more gut fill and lower feeding value. A UW Focus on Forage factsheet describes the reduced quality as maturity increases (www.uwex.edu/ces/crops/uwforage/MaturityNDF-FOF.htm). With increasing maturity, plants increase in complex carbohydrates bound to indigestible lignin, and digestibility decreases.

As usual, 2011 corn silage quality depended on where it was grown, when it was planted and when the rains came. If weather is dry during the vegetative stage (before silking), the stalk will be shorter and less lignified. The result is usually higher fiber digestibility. Warm nights can limit that however. Rain after pollination helps ear fill and kernel develop-


ment, increasing starch. The mid Atlantic 2011 samples from Cumberland Valley illustrate this. The opposite is common if the rainfall pattern is the reverse. Cumberland Valley samples from another region showed that effect. The New York samples from DairyOne illustrate a pattern where there may have been more rain, taller plants, more fiber, but cooler nights improved digestibility. Lower late season rain may have limited ear fill. Van Soest and others described the effect of growing season on forage quality years ago. The Sept. 25, 2011 issue of Hoards Dairyman has additional discussion on the effect topic.

Snyder (Progressive Dairyman 2011, <http://bit.ly/s1K4Fr>) discussed the importance of testing fiber digestibility and the value of comparing relative forage quality (RFQ) of forages instead of Relative Feed Value (RFV). That article illustrated the po-

tential economic loss when adjusting rations to compensate for lower RFQ. Lower digestibility and RFQ reduces intake potential (which is hard to make up) and results

in higher supplementation to try and maintain production. Test and know your forage quality to be able to make the best decisions to optimize profitability.

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