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The Feeders' Corner

The Feeders' Corner is for the use of our subscribers. Any interested are invited to ask questions, or send items of interest. All questions will receive prompt attention.

Bran vs. Oats for Milk

Is bran a better milk producing food than crushed oats? Would it be advisable to mix the two feeds? Should be moistened with water or fed dry?—C.H.M. Northumberland Co., Ont.

Experiments carried on at the Wisconsin Experiment Station on the relative merits of ground oats and bran as feed for milk cows show that oats produce 10 per cent. more milk and fat than bran. The high value of oats as a feed for milk production is well illustrated by these experiments. As a general rule, however, oats cost more per ton than bran. If the two grains can be bought for practically the same price, or where the oats cost not more than 10 per cent. more than bran, they would be equally as economical as bran. When the oats are raised on the farm they make an excellent basis for the ration for milk cows. Foods fed in combination always give better results than when fed singly, and bran and oats fed in a mixture would probably give greater returns in milk and fat than either grain fed separately.

As a general rule there is no advantage in moistening the grain fed, and the labor so expended is practically lost. If a cow is inclined, however to throw her feed around, and waste it, it would probably pay to moisten the grain fed.

Use of Salt for Dairy Cows

Some extensive experiments have been conducted by the Wisconsin Experiment Station to determine the value of salt for milk cows and also the amount of salt that should be given. The following is a summary of their findings: In every case the cows exhibited an abnormal appetite

for salt after having been deprived of it for two or three weeks, but in no case did the health of the animal, as shown by the general appearance, the live weight, or the yield of milk, appear to be affected until a much longer time had elapsed. This period of immunity varied with individual cows from less than one month to more than one year.

In every case there was finally reached a condition of low vitality in which a sudden and complete breakdown occurred, from which recovery was rapid if salt was supplied. This stage was marked by loss of appetite, a generally haggard appearance, lustreless eyes, a rough coat, and a very rapid decline in both live weight and yield of milk.

The breakdown was most likely to occur at calving or immediately after, when the system was weakened and the flow of milk large. In general the cows giving the largest amount of milk were the first to show signs of distress. They all suffered less in pasture than when confined to the stable.

The behavior of the cows in these trials indicates that their food contained sufficient chlorine to maintain them in good health, while dry, for an indefinite period, and it seems probable that a dry cow or steer would suffer no great inconvenience if given no salt except that contained in the normal ration. It is calculated that the ration given in these experiments contained chlorine equivalent to about .75 of an ounce of salt per day, and it is assumed that this is the minimum amount of salt required per 1,000 pounds live weight to sustain an animal that is not producing milk. If this amount is not present in the food, it should be supplied directly. In addition to this a cow should receive enough salt to compensate for the chlorine contained in the milk produced. In general this will require about .6 of an ounce of salt for each 20 pounds of milk given. A slight excess will

do no harm, and it is recommended that dairy cows be given at least one ounce of salt a day. Exceptionally heavy milkers will require more than this.

The uniform results obtained with all cows employed in these trials indicate beyond question that in Wisconsin, and in other regions similar by located, salt in addition to that obtained in the food is absolutely essential to the continued health of a dairy cow while producing milk.

How to Build an Ice House

Ed. Lane, Waterton Co., Ont.

I have had considerable experience in packing ice in all kinds of houses from air-tight ones down to those of simple structure. I consider the following the best plan of house for a farmer:

Select a spot shaded by a tree in the middle of the day and away from any other building in order to have a good air circulation. Make the house 8 by 10 or 10 by 12, according to the amount of ice needed. The walls are made 10 feet high.

Put up scantling not more than two feet apart all the way around, leaving a doorway at one end. Board up the inside with good lumber. The roof should be shingled. Leave a wide cornice. An opening between plates and roof boards of at least two inches should be left on both sides so that air can circulate whichever way the wind blows. In the centre of the roof should be a ventilator.

For casing on the outside use lumber six or eight inches wide. Put on the bottom board first. Let the next one lap over the first about an inch. Place a small block at every end so that it will not touch the lower board by a half inch. Proceed in this way to the top. Such a wall will give better satisfaction than what can be made and filled with sawdust.

On the floor of the house place six inches of sawdust, then a close layer of old fence rails or straight poles, not over three inches in diameter, and then three or four inches of sawdust on top of the rails. On this lay the first layer of ice, packing the blocks as close as possible. See that no sawdust gets in between the blocks. Leave a space of six to eight inches between the ice and sides of the building if sawdust is used for packing. If straw is used the space will be from 10 to 12 inches. Do not fill the cracks between the blocks with saw or water. Take a carpenter's adze and level off all inequalities to make a level bottom for the next tier, and there will be sufficient to fill the spaces between the blocks. If straw is used for packing the sides it should be put through the straw-cutter. Pea straw is preferable.

HARVEST IN MILD WEATHER

Hard frosty weather is not needed when putting up ice. The best time is when the thermometer is a few degrees below freezing. One can then cut as much ice in half a day as he could in a whole day with the thermometer below zero. In addition, a great deal more ice will go in a given space. A cube of ice, 12 inches square, on a soft day, if transferred to a temperature below zero for a while, will be found to measure nearly 12½ inches square. We can get, therefore, a good many hundreds of pounds more ice in a small house in soft weather than in hard, frosty weather. I have seen ice packed in soft weather come out at the end of the summer with the saw marks in the blocks.

As soon as the weather begins to get a little warm it is a good plan to tramp the packing as hard as possible, especially around the sides. It is now that one will see the advantage of good short straw.

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