

Finding Solutions to Sick Calves

Southview Dairy at Cologne was coming off a tough winter. Their baby calves spent most of the time curled up in their corn fodder bedding. Calves that Mark and Don Hesse thought were doing well would suddenly get sick. Several visitors suggested the brothers get more air flowing through their 30' x 50' calf barn to exhaust ammonia fumes rising from the bedding, but no one came up with a plan.

In March 2013, MLN dairy production specialist Steve Kallinen began to do calls at Southview Dairy. He prescribed electrolytes to get the sick calves back on their feet, and he introduced the Hesses to Land O'Lakes Amplifier® Max milk replacer and AMPLI-Calf® Calf Starter. Amp Max is a 22:20 all-milk product with 'architect' technology that stimulates gut health and growth of the small calves. AMPLI-Calf is a 20% starter feed that enhances intake and is a highly digestible feed that calves love to eat. This package of high-quality baby calf products got the Hesses' calves up and running.

But he didn't stop there. Listening to their stories of sickness and poor performance, Steve introduced the brothers to Maynard Moen, Munson Lakes' calf and heifer

consultant. "Maynard designed a ventilation system for our calf barn, and later we put a heated cement floor into the whole building," says Mark.

With better nutrition and a well-ventilated barn, the calves appeared healthier and more active. But looks can be deceiving. The real proof came when they sold their bull calves and the buyer had a tough time catching them. "What did you feed your calves?" he asked with surprise. "I've never seen calves so active." That observation, from an outside party, told Mark and Don that their changes in feed and facilities were working. "More active calves means they are healthier, so hopefully the heifers' calves will make better milk cows in the long run," says Don—adding, "We'll tell you for sure in a year and a half."

One thing is for sure, their calf barn smells fresh, their baby calves are up and active, and the Hesses are anxious to see how the electric heated concrete floors work out this winter. "Besides the warmth, the benefit of concrete is that it can be thoroughly scrubbed when we clean out the barn," says Don.

So, what made the difference in their calves, better nutrition or better housing? "Probably both, and we found two guys who followed through," Mark states, referring to Steve and Maynard from Munson Lakes Nutrition.

Southview's legacy

Don and Mark are the sixth generation of Hesses to work this dairy farm. "The way I understand it," says Don, "John and Elizabeth Hesse stopped in Burlington, WI, in 1856 on their way here from Germany." It was John's dream to farm in Minnesota, which was still a territory. While in Wisconsin, John passed away. Elizabeth and the rest of her family continued on to the place northeast of Cologne where the dairy now stands. "They applied for a homestead, and in



Left to right, Don and Mark Hesse of Southview Dairy with MLN's Steve Kallinen.

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1859 their application was granted,” says Don. “There have been Hesses on this land ever since.”

In 1995, Don and Mike began to take over the operation from their dad and mom, Roman and Betty Hesse. The purchase was finalized in 2003. “We built a free-stall barn in 1995 and a milking parlor in 1998. We were milking around 90 cows when we began, and now we’re milking 130 cows. Not much else has changed since then.”

Fresh eyes on the problem

Adopting new ways of doing things is not unusual for Mark and Don Hesse. Two years ago, they installed an auto-feeder for their baby calves. The calves are fed up to 14 times per day with the auto feeder, and now that they’re feeding Amp Max, they’re getting the results they wanted from the system. For seven days, the brothers feed Amp Max milk replacer made with NT so medication is accurately fed. Then for seven days following, they feed the regular Amp Max without NT.



Baby calf enters the auto-feeder in the Hesses’ calf barn.



An intake fan and conduit in the rafters delivers consistent fresh air to the Hesses’ calf barn.



Two exhaust fans pull contaminated air away from the calves.

Despite a willingness to embrace new ideas, the brothers say changing how they ventilate their calf barn has taken some getting used to. “Before, we’d open everything up and air out the building naturally, but the air was moving over the heads of the calves,” they say. Now, the Hesses have closed everything up. Two exhaust fans pull contaminated air away from the calves while an intake fan forces fresh air into the barn through a conduit in the rafters for better, consistent air flow. The result has been worth it, according to Don. “By exhausting the stale, ammonia-filled air, we end up with healthier calves,” he observes.

The Hesse brothers say they are glad Steve Kallinen began to call on Southview Dairy. “There’s value in someone walking into the barn and seeing how we could do things better,” Mark says. “I spend every day in this barn, so it’s not as obvious to me as it is to someone like Steve or Maynard walking through it for the first time.” ●

Our Feed Safety Coordinator

By Brian Yager, Feed Safety Coordinator

I’ve been hired as the new feed safety coordinator for Munson Lakes Nutrition (MLN). My main focus will be divided between feed safety and the safety of our employees.

Much of my work will involve promoting and implementing the Hazardous Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) program, which aims to address potential contamination points in the food-production process. Keeping MLN in compliance with state and federal regulations based on HACCP will also be my responsibility. This is an extremely important issue in a world where food safety and biosecurity are top of mind for consumers, the food industry, and the government.

I’ll be working with HACCP as it relates to the animal feed manufacturing process. My goal will be to prevent contamination from happening and, if it does happen, to have the capability of tracing the problem back to its origin.

My background

I’ve lived in central Minnesota all of my life. I grew up on a dairy farm south of Waverly. After attending the U of M at St. Paul, I returned to the farm where I milked until 1991. From 1991 to 2007, I managed Lake Region Cooperative based at Maple Lake. From

2007 until present, I represented a firm that managed employee benefits for cooperatives. In that capacity, I traveled from coast to coast and from Minnesota to Texas. I saw and learned a lot, but I’m quite happy with my new position in Howard Lake as I only have to travel six miles to work.

I believe my farm upbringing, the management skills I’ve learned, and my past work with all kinds of cooperatives will help me understand the food chain from farm to table and how the feed manufacturing segment of the chain affects the whole.

If you have a question on feed or food safety, call me at the Howard Lake Mill at 320-543-2561 or email byager@nutelecom.net. ●



Brian with bags of ingredients at our Howard Lake mill.

New Ways to Improve Profitability

By Dr. Andy Mueller, Field Dairy Nutritionist

Purina Animal Nutrition launched two new products this summer to help improve milk production, performance, and your dairy's profitability.

Solution 1 - Propel Energy Plus™ with High Saturated Fat

The first new product is **Propel Energy Plus™**, a high saturated fat nugget that flows out of a bin, can be added into protein or grain mixes, and can be top-dressed on the farm. The advantage of **Energy Plus** is that it is 93% saturated fat, similar to other prilled fat products on the market. However, **Energy Plus** is highly palatable and does not have some of the feeding limitations or ingredient reactivity that other high-saturated fat products have when added into mixes.

Research shows that, in some instances, rations containing more than 300 grams of unsaturated fats—the fat found in oilseeds like roasted beans, cottonseed, or distillers grains—have been known to cause a depression in butter fat. As a result, some nutritionists and producers prefer to only supplement rations by adding fat products that are high in saturated fat.

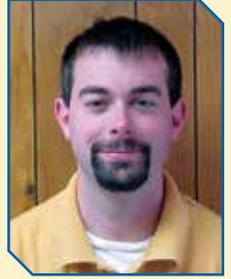
Energy Plus meets those supplemental saturated fat requirements in an easy-to-handle form that is lower in cost than other prilled fat sources currently on the market.

Solution 2 - Rally™ Technology for Heat Stress

The second new product from Purina is **Rally™** Technology for heat stress. Keep this in mind for next summer.

Rally™ has been around for almost 15 years and has three patents for:

- 1) Decreasing **Non-Esterified Fatty Acids** (NEFAs) up to 40% in prefresh cows.
- 2) Increasing early lactation intakes 3.8 lbs. and take-off milk 5.1 lbs.
- 3) Increasing total milk production by 3.5 lbs.



Over the last three summers, Rally has been tested in heat stress chambers at the University of Missouri and in the field on numerous farms in Mexico and across the U.S. These trials showed that, in the presence of heat stress, cows fed Rally maintained intake and milk production better than cows not fed Rally. The research on this valuable aspect of Rally is conclusive, although the patent is pending.

Rally appears to work by increasing intakes and by changing how the cow uses energy/glucose, which is unique to this product. Other summer heat stress products try to increase water intake or reduce the cow's body temperature in hopes of keeping her eating and milking, but they do not affect how she uses energy or her overall energy needs. Energy/glucose is what keeps your cows healthy and milking year-round, but it is especially crucial during times of heat stress when they tend to be more energy deficient.

For more information on how **Propel Energy Plus™** and **Rally™** can work to increase your dairy's profitability, contact your Munson Lakes sales nutritionist at 320-543-2561 or 800-245-7717. ●

Mill Upgrade Finished



View from west of new driveway.

In an effort to increase our efficiency, we've replaced the six finished feed load out bins on the north side of our mill with 10 loadout bins. With the number of trucks delivering feed from this mill, sometimes they sit idle. We don't always have the capacity to load them out and continue to make feed. We've increased the number of loadout bins so we can have finished feed ready to load onto each truck as it returns from the country.

We needed to dig up our ingredient-loading driveway to put in footings for the bins. So while we were doing that, we decided to expand our receiving pit to allow us to take an entire semi-load of ingredients into the pit at once. Now that this upgrade is finished, we're able to move ingredient trucks in and out within five minutes, rather than the 20-30 minutes it took before.

The biggest benefit of all these improvements is the reduction of expense to produce each ton of feed. At Munson Lakes Nutrition, we're always looking for ways to keep your feed costs down. ●



View from east.

BRING TOUGH QUESTIONS...

Talk one-on-one with our most experienced nutritionists at the Munson Lakes Nutrition booth.

Midwest Dairy Expo
St. Cloud Convention Center
Dec. 3-4, 2013



Keeping Our Promise of Quality

By John Zander, General Manager



Throughout our 77-year history, this company has always promised its customers 1) a great product at a fair price, 2) great service, and 3) decisions based on fairness and decency. That three-part promise has been and continues to be the statement of values which guides the day-to-day operations of Munson Lakes

Nutrition. See Our Mission at right.

The first part of that promise, a great product, requires verification. Every year since 1996, the Howard Lake Mill and its crew have received the Land O' Lakes' Dedication to Quality Award. This year was no exception.

On top of that, we just finished a two-day audit of our record-keeping and feed manufacturing procedures by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The FDA looked closely to make sure we were using medications correctly, sequencing feed to ensure no cross-contamination, and delivering the quality of feed our customers ordered. We passed the audit with flying colors.

All this should give you assurance that you can trust the Munson Lakes products and the people who sell, make, and deliver them.

Mill improvements completed

The upgrade to our mill, including the replacement of six finished feed loadout bins with 10 loadout

bins, has been completed. The new facility is now in use, and we're happy with how it is working. We now have feed ready to load onto each truck when it returns from the country. This improvement will strengthen the second part of our promise, to give great customer service.

All that needs to be finished now is a little road work on the north side of the mill.

Brian Yager hired

I have hired Brian Yager as a full-time feed safety coordinator for Munson Lakes Nutrition. In this position, Brian will work to keep our company and feed manufacturing operations in compliance with the international Hazardous Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) program, which works to prevent food contamination rather than inspecting at the end of the processing chain.

For a number of months, we had been working on this important initiative as we had time. But it quickly became apparent that HACCP compliance needed the focus of a full-time employee who could do the work on a timely basis.

I have known Brian for many years. He is a detail person with experience in agri-business, and he knows many of our customers. Brian will be a great fit to our staff at Howard Lake. See his story on Page 2.

Thanks to everyone for allowing us to work with you. Have a safe fall harvest. ●

OUR MISSION

Some things never change – even after 77 years.

THE VALUES THAT SHAPED OUR HERITAGE WILL REMAIN. MUNSON LAKES NUTRITION WILL CONTINUE TO:

- MANUFACTURE A GREAT PRODUCT AT A FAIR PRICE.
- GIVE GREAT CUSTOMER SERVICE.
- BASE EVERY DECISION ON FAIRNESS AND DECENCY.

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