

Dairy News October 2017

Youngstock Facility Design and the Dairyland Initiative

Are you interested in building some youngstock facilities? Are you interested in housing your calves inside a building? Do you know how to design the facility to reduce the chance of respiratory disease in your youngstock? These questions and more were answered at the Dairyland Initiative youngstock facility design workshop held in Milwaukee this past September. Dr. Scott Wiley attended this meeting.

The Dairyland Initiative is a guide to welfare friendly dairy cattle housing. It has been put together by the University Of Wisconsin School Of Veterinary Medicine. Their goal is to design housing that will result in healthy, productive dairy cattle. They hold workshops on such topics as youngstock housing, dairy barn renovations, new barn design, positive pressure tube ventilation, and adult dairy cattle heat abatement. They have dairy farm tours that showcase welfare friendly dairy cattle housing. They have a website, theDairylandInitiative.vetmed.wisc.edu, which shares all of their dairy housing plans. The website also has 20 virtual tours and spreadsheets to help with decision making on dairy housing.

Dr. Scott Wiley and many of the other veterinarians at Dairyland Veterinary Service have attended one or more of the workshops or tours put on by the Dairyland Initiative. We are very familiar with the website. If you are planning a barn renovation, planning to build a new barn, or want to improve the air quality to young heifers, check out the website and talk to your veterinarian. If you have any trouble getting onto the website, let us know. When it comes time to meet with your builder, please include us in on the meeting. We would love to help you improve your current housing or help design new housing that will result in healthy productive animals.

Best Wishes for a good harvest season.



“Smile, You Are on Candid Camera”

Candid Camera was an Allen Funt-hosted TV show that some of you may remember. It was brought to my memory by the May 2017 article in Dairy Herd Management by Jim Dickrell, which was about how Todd Franz was using time-lapse cameras to detect feeding issues. Franz is a regional feed manager with Diamond V.

Dairyland Veterinary Service has purchased one of these time-lapse camera and we are starting to use it to help farmers see what is happening at the feed bunks and stalls throughout the day.



Time-lapse cameras are useful because they take pictures at a set interval from seconds to hours over a period of time and then make a video of the pictures. The result is a video of a day's events that can be viewed in a few minutes.

Issues such as timing of feedings and feed pushups which could affect dry matter intake can be easily seen. The amount of time cows spend eating when fresh feed is delivered should be less than an hour, otherwise, overeating could cause acidosis. Also, “cows are territorial and will move eight to 10 lock-up spots at the most”, Franz says. The people pushing up feed should insure that the feed is evenly distributed. In this picture, most of the bunk on the left is empty. The cows cannot reach the feed in the bunk on the right. In both cases, the cows will overeat at the next feeding opportunity. Correcting these feeding issues would likely improve cow health and productivity.



If you are interested in seeing what is happening at the bunk while you sleep, contact your herd veterinarian to set up the time-lapse camera for recording bunk activity. It will answer questions of how feedings and feed push-ups are affecting your herd.

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