

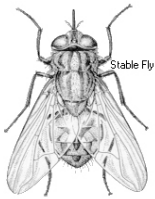
Texas Dairy Matters

Higher Education Supporting the Industry

PREPARE FOR SUMMER

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Hot weather is just around the corner. Start to “summerize” your facilities now. Clean the fans. Dust and debris accumulations on fan blades and grills can cause increased electrical load, diminished fan efficiency, reduced fan output and escalating electrical bills.



Plan for fly control. Flies contribute to mastitis and impact cow comfort. Cows may not eat as often if bothered by flies, resulting in a loss in milk production. Consider new foam insecticide applicators. Install applicators in appropriate locations before fly season starts. Evaluate including a larvacide in the ration. Look for fly breeding areas and eliminate them. A little detective work to identify and clean up these areas reaps big benefits from reduced fly loads. Investigate introduction of parasitic wasps. Some dairies have been successful in including these natural predators, along with good farmstead sanitation, as effective fly control procedures. Don't forget about fly control on the heifers and dry cows.

Talk with your nutritionist to insure that cows receive rations they want to eat during the summer months. One key to reducing summer production drops is to provide a diet that is palatable. Consider altering your feeding schedule so cows have fresh feed in front of them more frequently. Feed during cooler parts of the day and at night to encourage cows to come to the feed area.

Manage water troughs to insure they are clean and adequately sized for the number of cows that have access to them. Test your water quality. Install water troughs so cows have access to water before and after milking. Be careful not to impede cow flow. Production may increase due to increased water availability.



If you have dry lots, provide adequate shades. Orient them North – South so the sun can help dry wet spots as the shade moves.

Historically, Texas has higher somatic cell counts (SCC) in the summer. Note the table below from the Market Administrator with August and September having the highest SCC counts for Texas. Although late lactation cows may be a contributing factor to high SCC, continue practicing mastitis control measures. Check that milking standard operating procedures are being followed. Evaluate whether milkers adequately cover the teats pre- and post-milking with an appropriate teat sanitizer.

TEXAS AND NEW MEXICO MARKET COMPONENT TEST										
Month	Butterfat		Protein		Other Solids		S-N-E		SCC ^{a/}	
	TX	NM	TX	NM	TX	NM	TX	NM	TX	NM
May 2005	3.61	3.48	3.02	2.94	5.71	5.74	8.73	8.68	300	244
June	3.57	3.41	2.97	2.90	5.72	5.75	8.69	8.65	332	248
July	3.59	3.43	2.98	2.88	5.70	5.74	8.68	8.62	347	252
August	3.63	3.47	3.01	2.91	5.71	5.75	8.73	8.66	365	275
September	3.69	3.52	3.07	2.97	5.68	5.72	8.75	8.69	366	270
October	3.76	3.60	3.14	3.06	5.70	5.73	8.84	8.79	337	254
November	3.87	3.70	3.18	3.11	5.70	5.72	8.88	8.84	293	228
December	3.93	3.76	3.18	3.12	5.71	5.73	8.89	8.84	269	212
Averages 2005	3.71	3.57	3.08	3.00	5.70	5.73	8.78	8.73	325	262
January 2006	3.85	3.72	3.12	3.07	5.70	5.72	8.82	8.78	257	209
February	3.84	3.68	3.10	3.06	5.72	5.71	8.82	8.76	248	201
March	3.77	3.63	3.06	3.03	5.71	5.69	8.76	8.72	249	198
April	3.70	3.57	3.00	2.97	5.70	5.70	8.70	8.66	254	202
May	3.65	3.52	3.02	2.97	5.73	5.74	8.76	8.71	262	196

a/ In thousands.

And don't forget about milker's comfort in the parlor. Provide a fan or some other way to make it more comfortable in the pit during milking. Hot parlors are not conducive to proper milking procedures.

These are but a few of the proactive measures you should evaluate before you get hit with the summer heat.

October 2005