

# Texas Dairy Matters

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## MAINTAIN SUMMERTIME DRY MATTER INTAKES

Michael A. Tomaszewski, Ph.D.  
Extension Dairy Specialist  
Department of Animal Science  
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service  
The Texas A&M University System

With summer having arrived, monitor dry matter intake. Dry matter is directly correlated with milk production, making it an excellent monitor to predict milk production. Higher temperatures typically lead to reduced dry matter intake. Take steps now to maintain or even increase dry matter intake.

Start with shades to assist in relieving heat stress. Shades over feed bunks and holding areas help reduce heat stress and encourage feed intake. Maintain the area around permanent shades in dry lots to insure that cows have a dry, comfortable place to lie. To prevent wet spots in the cow yard, orient shades north- south to create an east-west shadow. In freestall barns, make sure beds are maintained and groomed properly to encourage cow usage. Provide adequate sand and routinely level the stalls. Beds that have holes or are very hard are not conducive to cow usage.



Fans and misters over the feeding alley are recommended. If you don't have fans, install them.

Clean the fans regularly to improve performance. Repair broken fans immediately. For soakers, measure the length of water line required and calculate the amount of water needed to fill the

pipe. The sprinklers on the end of the line require the same amount of water to function properly as do those at the beginning.

Fans are an integral part of the cooling process. Select fans that provide air flow rates of 11,000 cubic feet per minute at a velocity of 400-600 feet per minute. Hang fans above the sprinklers and tilted downward at 20 to 30 degree angles to direct the air flow on the cows. Follow the rule of thumb for placing horizontal –axis fans by mounting 36-inch fans to move air 30 feet and 48-inch fans to move air 40 feet. Water without fans may be worse than no water at all. Airflow is essential for evaporation. Soak cows with increasing frequency as temperatures rises.



Fresh drinking water is the most important nutrient for dairy cows. Clean water troughs routinely. Install extra troughs so cows are not walking as far to get water. For a cow producing 80 pounds of milk, as night temperatures raise from 60 to 80 degrees, an additional 7 gallons of water per day is required. Change feeding times so feed is available at cooler times of the day to encourage feed intake, and increase the number of times the feed is pushed up. These are a few tips that will help to maintain dry matter intake.