

Texas Dairy Matters

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RATION MANAGEMENT TO MINIMIZE RUMINAL ACIDOSIS

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Acidosis is caused by low intake of effective fiber or high intake of rumen digestible carbohydrates. Many times, these occur together from one ration. These diets can cause laminitis, displaced abomasums or sporadic diarrhea. Losses to the producer may include decreased milk production, increased treatment costs, reduced fertility and premature culling.

To some extent, sub-acute rumen acidosis (SARA) may be inevitable in high producing cattle due to the reduction in chewing and rumination per pound of rumen digestible carbohydrate with increasing feed intake. Ration management may promote SARA conditions. Errors throughout the process of feed mixing and delivery may include:

- Errors in feed sampling and analyses,
- Errors in dry matter adjustments for forage changes,
- Errors in ingredient loading accuracy, and
- Failure to evaluate ration and refusal particle size.



Consider cow comfort with ration management. Research suggests increased laminitis occurs in cows that spend more time standing on concrete rather than lying in stalls. Additionally, heat stressed cows may be more susceptible to laminitis due to decreased rumination and saliva loss during panting.

When investigating high incidences of laminitis, cow comfort and environment should be evaluated in addition to the formulated diet.

<http://texasdairymatters.org>

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