

Adams Advanced Nutrition, Inc.

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Questions & Answers on Rumensin® Use in Dairy Rations (Part I)

Are there any rations where I should expect a better potential response to the inclusion of Rumensin®, or is anticipated response uniform across a variety of ration compositions?

The response to feeding Rumensin® has the potential to vary, depending upon feeding rate, ration composition, and herd dynamics. Positive responses usually occur, namely either an improvement in feed efficiency and/or a slight increase in milk production (usually 2-4 lb/cow/day, if it occurs). **However**, the potential for negative effects, namely butterfat depression, also exists. Adding Rumensin® to a ration will increase the potential for butterfat depression in a dose-dependent fashion, but to varying degrees. Herds receiving well balanced rations that facilitate good rumen health generally have the greatest potential to respond favorably (improved feed efficiency, increased milk production and/or fat-corrected milk yield). The addition of Rumensin® to rations supporting low butterfat, or at risk of creating a butterfat depression (high NFC, high rumen-available fat, and/or low NDF content), will likely worsen the situation. In order to improve the chances of making a profitable decision, always consider current rumen health and milk components before adding Rumensin® to a lactation ration.

How long does it typically take to appreciate the full extent of the cows' response to the feeding of Rumensin®?

As a general rule, give the herd 10-14 days to fully respond to the addition of Rumensin®. By this time, changes in rumen bacterial populations should have stabilized, and the full extent of any changes in feed intake, production, and/or butterfat percentage should be evident.

Should I feed Rumensin® to my dry cows even if I'm not going to feed it in the lactating ration?

Yes, in this author's opinion. Because of the shift in rumen bacterial populations and VFA production that occurs when Rumensin® is fed, including it in the dry or pre-fresh ration should facilitate a smoother transition to the lactation ration. In essence, rumen bacterial populations will be better prepared for and adapted to the higher grain content of the lactation ration. This should encourage better intakes after calving, and hopefully, fewer metabolic problems.

Are there any other reasons to feed Rumensin® to dry cows?

Although no label claims exist in the US to support it, there is a substantial amount of Canadian data showing reduced risk and occurrence of fresh cow problems (particularly ketosis and DAs) when transition cows receive Rumensin® (the primary means of Rumensin® delivery to cows in Canada is via a controlled release bolus). To maximize the response, Rumensin® would ideally be fed both pre- and post-calving, but feeding it only during the dry period should still provide some benefit.

(by Dr. R. Tom Bass, II, DVM, PhD, Renaissance Nutrition, Inc. 2005)

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Health Checks for Calves...

Observing the health status of a dairy calf each day is important. These checks need to be conducted to ensure the health and comfort of calves ~ a means of evaluating calves for current and potential health problems, updating records, and providing overall health information for the calf operation. They also serve as veterinarian and management diagnostic tools.

Often the first sign of illness in a calf is the loss of appetite. Paying attention to calves that drink more slowly than normal is an important first-observation. Calves need to

be closely monitored for pending problems if they display any of the following behaviors: playing with their milk rather than drinking with vigor, lying down immediately after drinking most/all the milk, acting listless at feeding times, or refusing all/part of the milk. These behaviors are not normal for a healthy calf and often are the beginning of further health problems.

Using visual observations of the calf is the next important phase of daily health checks. Calves should have clear bright eyes, not eyes that are sunken, watery or glazed. Their ears should be slightly erect and turned forward, not droopy or turned down. The nose should be moist, not runny or dry, or showing signs of obvious mucus. Breathing should be slow and even, not rapid, panting or requiring obvious effort. The hair coat should be shiny and smooth to slightly curled, with no flaking, patchy or brittle skin appearance. Calves should be dry and comfortable, with no signs of being cold or shivering. When healthy calves get up from resting they should stretch and remain stable when standing. Above all, they should eat vigorously at all times.

Use your nose to check the breath of the calf, which should smell sweet to slightly sour, not rancid or curdled. Smell the air around the calf pen also. Unpleasant or sour odors may indicate other health problems.

Finally, use your ears to check the calf and its surroundings. Listen to evaluate if calves sound hungry near feeding time. They should also appear content and quiet shortly after feeding time and while resting. Always listen for coughing or labored breathing. The quiet sounds of calves resting or nibbling on grain should be the norm when it is not close to or after feeding time.

Each calf deserves 30 seconds or more of a calf manager's attention each day, and often more than once a day. Being sensitive and aware of what signs the calf may be displaying is the job of the calf caregiver. Observing key signs of healthy calves... or those needing special attention or treatment is important to your future herd.

(edited from an article by Dr. Jud Heinrichs, Penn State University)

Interested in discussing topics in this newsletter, or want to do a better job feeding and managing your cows? Call me! My goal is to help you. That's Renaissance's commitment to you!

VOLUME 4 – Number 2 – February 2005

RENAISSANCE
Your TEAM for RESULTS!



Digestibility!

How digestible are your forages?

Forage digestibility has a significant impact on the productivity and profitability of your cows. Nutrient availability is critical to both rumen microbes and the cows. At Renaissance offer the advantage of a large, growing database, which catalogs extensive results on starch and fiber digestibility, and includes many corn hybrids, alfalfa and grass varieties. Samples are analyzed at several time points and with *In vitro* and *In situ* methods, allowing us to see how a particular variety may react in the rumen. Knowing the nutritional value and digestibility of forages makes a difference in understanding how your cows will perform. Get the facts today! Feed for RESULTS.



WHAT'S IT LIKE AROUND THE FARM?

Winter is here ~ along with cold, ice and snow (depending on your area). This brings with it a unique set of challenges, such as ensuring you have sufficient forage inventories for the season. This is critical, since forages comprise the largest part of almost all rations. I can help you evaluate feed inventories and help ensure you have enough to make it through the entire winter season and into spring! You need to plan ahead for an adequate supply. Forage "extenders," such as soy hulls, brewer's grain, and citrus or beet pulp, might be necessary. But energy sources may be more of what is needed. Don't forget the heifers, as you review available forages. Here's a chart that might help:

↕ Number of Cows ↕														
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	20	40	60	80	100
5.5	11	16.5	22	27.5	33	38.5	44	49.5	55	110	219	329	493	548

↑ Approximate Tons of Forage Dry Matter Needed Annually ↓

A POINT TO PONDER...

It's hard to believe we are already in the second month of 2005! Winter weather is probably wearing a bit thin right now... added chores, frozen pipes, shoveling snow, extra clothing, icy roads, etc. Maybe it's time to give yourself and your family a bit of a change! This "bit of change" need not be costly or drastic, like going out for a nice meal, having friends over, or taking time to visit family and friends. It is important to take time to appreciate family and friends; time to reflect on opportunities and possibilities that may impact our lives; time to be prepared and refreshed for the rigors of the coming spring.



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Winter feeding ~
Challenges and opportunities!
Results!



Check it out.

