

tricks to minimizing wastage on the farm and even when prices are high they'll help improve the financial health of the dairy.

VandeHaar said wastage is often overlooked in the evaluation of feed efficiency. Poor storage, inadequate feed mixes, and poor timing in the delivery of feed all contribute to losses in feed efficiency.

VandeHaar also advised producers to feed their cows according to their needs. While feeding each individual exactly what they need to stay fit, healthy, fertile and productive may take more technology than is present in the existing barn, he said it is possible to group cows according to their lactation cycle--fresh, high lactation and late lactation.

He said that by grouping the cows according to where they are in the lactation cycle a producer can save feed costs and provide the cow with feed they'll use more efficiently.

VandeHaar said expensive supplements should be saved for cows in early lactation because this is where

they are the most effective in maintaining the animals' health and boosting milk production. He said cows in peak lactation need a low fiber diet that is also rich in digestible starch to support higher volumes of milk output. By the time the cow reaches late lactation it's time to switch them to high fibre diets with less digestible starch so they don't start

converting energy to fat on their bodies. Like people, cows that have too much body fat are prone to poor health and reproductive problems.

VandeHaar's overall message to his audience at the 2014 Western Canadian Dairy Seminar: "Expensive supplements are most useful in early lactation. Cheap feeds are best used in late lactation." **D**



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