Mineral supplements

Laurence C. Snook
Mineral supplements

Erratum
Missing text Change in Feeding: Sometimes the sudden change in feeding after coming into the milking shed may precipitate ketosis. Obviously it is wise to avoid sudden changes in feeding, particularly with recently calved cows. If possible, cows should be fed for some weeks before calving on increasing amounts of the production ration. If this is not possible, do not feed a full production ration immediately after calving, but gradually increase the rate of feeding over several weeks. Sudden changes in feeding or management which are likely to upset the cow's appetite should be avoided. Treatment is concerned mainly with enticing the animal to resume eating. Tempt the cow with any supplement or fodder which may promote appetite.
Now is the time to select paddocks for summer fodder crops and to order seed and fertilizer.

Sudan Grass and Japanese Millet are usually sown in late September—early October, and spring cereal crops for late grazing should be planted in late August—early September.

Phosphorus:
Phosphorus supplements are essential for continuous high level production.
Phosphorus is best supplied by giving each cow three ounces of Christmas Island phosphate daily. This can be purchased in 80 lb. bags at a cost of about 12s. a bag.
Start feeding a small amount of phosphate and gradually increase this until three ounces are being fed each day.

Cobalt:
A marginal cobalt deficiency exists on many dairy farms in Western Australia and may cause serious production losses. The best way to correct this is to use cobalt-supersuperphosphate on one third of the farm each year. The additional cost is only 3s. 8d. a bag of superphosphate.
Cobalt is added to most proprietary dairy feeds and can also be fed in mineral licks. Further details can be obtained from Departmental Bulletins 2465 and 2849.

Copper:
Scours and poor coat colour in grazing animals can be caused by copper deficient dairy farm pastures. Degenerated pasture and the presence of Lotus minor (which has replaced sub clover) often indicate a copper deficiency.
If in doubt on this matter call in your District Adviser. Stock cannot be expected to thrive on copper deficient pastures.

SPRING SOWN LUCERNE
Seeding in late August is recommended. At this time pest damage and competition from weeds are avoided.
Seed beds for lucerne must be prepared now and a lime dressing applied three weeks before seeding. Drilling pelleted seed is recommended.

MINERAL SUPPLEMENTS

PRODUCTIVE dairy cows have a high mineral requirement. A deficiency can cause lowered milk production and poor health may result if it is not corrected.

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AFTER-CALVING DISEASES

Milk Fever
Cases of milk fever are all too common at this time of the year. Fortunately, treatment is nearly always effective if the trouble is detected in time.
Milk fever is due to a temporary shortage of calcium in the blood—not to a lack of calcium in the diet. This is mentioned because some farmers have gone to considerable trouble to feed lime to their cows before calving, in the hope that this will prevent milk fever.

Acetonemia or Ketosis
Ketosis can cause serious losses in a dairy herd. Generally it is the most productive cows which are affected. The animals lose appetite at the peak period of production and unless checked will rapidly lose condition and "dry-off."
The characteristic feature of this disease is the loss of appetite.
Cobalt Supplement:
In some local herds, ketosis appears to have been eliminated by the use of cobalt supplements. The cows were on properties where a marginal deficiency of cobalt could be expected to lower the appetite of recently calved cows. This, apparently, was enough to start the decline which lead to ketosis.
No cases of ketosis occurred after cobalt was added to the diet in several productive herds which were previously seriously affected.