Phosphorus Management on Northeast and Mid-Atlantic Dairy Farms: Survey Results. (S08-dou132733-Poster)

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Abstract:

As the initial phase of a comprehensive project designed to develop optimal P management technologies, we surveyed dairy farmers in NY, PA, DE, MD, and VA on herd management and producer opinions on issues related to P feeding of lactating cows. Questionnaires were mailed in January 2002 to a random sample of 2500 farms. Response rate approximated 25%. Holstein was the predominant dairy breed (91%). Lactating herd size averaged 97 for MD, NY and VA and 64 for PA with similar milk yield for all five states (28 kg/d). TMR feeding was reported by 50% of respondents, component feeding by 40%, and intensive grazing by 3%. The majority (76%) reported routine forage testing. Diet P (% feed DM) ranged from 0.36% to 0.70% with a mean of 0.44% based on valid numerical values provided by 96 respondents. Use of mineral P supplements was reported by 60% of respondents. An overwhelming majority (89%) reported aware of nutrient management regulations; 47% acknowledged a general problem of P surplus on animal farms; 21% reported already reduced diet P; and 70% expressed interests in reducing P feeding if conditions are met. Reasons given for lack of interest in reducing P feeding include: current level recommended by professionals (64%), P helps with reproduction (36%), concerns over possible production loss (26%), safety margin (17%), etc. Clearly, farmers and nutrition service providers are all players impacting feeding decisions.

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