



PERFORMANCE PRO-BIOTICS
DIRECT-FED MICROBIALS

COPING WITH LOWER MILK PRICES

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The drop in opening milk prices around the country creates hefty challenges for the dairy farmer and the need to look closely at the operation. There are many things that are known but sometimes forgotten and we must be careful to make decisions that don't negatively affect the long term viability of the farm.

Nutrition is one area that is often looked at but needs to be carefully thought through as making the wrong decisions can be detrimental to long term viability of the farm with one of the main areas affected being herd health and fertility. Let's not make the same mistakes we have seen in the past where we have encountered challenging times. Following is a list of things to consider:

1. Water is the first limiting nutrient. Ensure water is easily available and of good quality. A simple thing like regular cleaning of water troughs can increase water intake and have a positive effect on milk production.
2. In many cases cows travel long distances to pasture and feed. Try and reduce the distance that cows travel even if this means looking at bring fodder to the cows rather than travel the cows to the fodder. The rule of thumb is for every kilometre saved equates to 1 litre in the vat.
3. Essential macro minerals such as calcium, phosphorus and magnesium can be delivered daily to the cows in many different ways. We have seen quite a saving by producers looking at different options. Discuss this with your Performance Representative as you might be surprised with the outcome.
4. Optimum rumen function is critical to maximizing feed conversion rate (FCR). The addition of 30 grams per cow per day of Performance Probiotics improves FCR. The options you have with improved FCR are:
 - A. Reduce the amount of grain being fed to the cows as they are now converting the feed more efficiently (feed less for the same production). You might even find that components could increase and herd health and fertility to improve.
 - B. Maintain current feeding levels and gain in milk production, improved components whilst also improving herd health and fertility.
 - C. Maximising feed conversion also means gaining the most from grass. Adding 30 grams per cow per day of Performance Probiotics will allow you to gain the most from this grass.

All of these options should be discussed with your Performance Representative as both rates and product delivery needs to accurate to give us the best chance for success. What gains made by using Performance Probiotics can vary from farm to farm, and your Performance Representative can sit down and discuss these with you.

5. Ensure your overall herd nutrition is up to date. Nutrition inputs and pasture availability are changing constantly. The aim must be to deliver target specification intake day in and day out. A minimum quarterly review of your nutrition with your consultant is recommended or whenever you have a major change in ingredient price input. Some examples of this would be grain price changing \$40/t, improvement in pasture growth or change in pasture type being offered. Performance Probiotics offer this service free of charge to the producer.
6. Consider herd health and fertility with every decision you make. Improving herd health of the cow gives a positive result in the vat but savings can be made in veterinary costs which can be substantial. Improved fertility is one area many herds need assistance, with every



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1% improvement in fertility resulting in substantial increases in overall profit. Unfortunately in the past this is the area that was forgotten in the decision making process and in many cases had long negative effects on farm performance. Discuss this with your Performance Representative as the use of Performance Probiotics in this area has seen good improvements on fertility whilst also making gains in production parameters.

7. Vitamins and minerals are essential and should not be even contemplated dropping out of the nutrition program as the results can be dire. There is a myth that the higher the vitamin and mineral level the better for the cows. Not the case with more not necessarily meaning better! Whilst we do need minimum levels of vitamins and minerals for things like maintenance, production and health it's the ratios between the vitamins and minerals that is more important not the levels. The source and type of vitamins and minerals is also important. An example of this is how many times have we seen recommendations to increase Zinc levels for improved hoof quality with little if no result? In many cases the idea was right but the source of the zinc has not been correct and the ratio between other minerals has not been considered. We have found that in some cases we can save money with lower vitamin and mineral levels but get a better result due to having good sources and correct ratios of vitamins and minerals. This must be discussed with your Performance Probiotics Representative.

8. Quite often fodder being fed is of poor quality and in many cases the price of this fodder is the same as good quality. Try to avoid poor quality fodder and shop around for quality. Certainly pay more attention to the quality of fodder being purchased. Performance Probiotics has a number of ingredient quality guidelines such as "grain density specifications".

9. The true value of ingredient inputs is not always recognized or known. In some cases different ingredients can be purchased that have a better nutrition value and a saving can be made than that being currently used. We see this regularly with bi-products where quite possibly a good quality grain can be purchased and fed in alternative to the bi-product at a lower input cost per cow per day. Your Performance Probiotic Representative can assist you with these decisions.

10. Mycotoxins can be found in many ingredient inputs such as grain, silage, hay, bi-products and protein sources. The subclinical effects of mycotoxins can be realized in the vat and also on the herd health and fertility. A severe case can be visual sickness and mortality. A cheap insurance is the use of a mycotoxin binder which there is many on the market. Performance Probiotics can also help reduce the effects of mycotoxins by ensuring stable rumen function and making sure the cow is in peak health to cope with such challenges. Your Nutritionist or Performance Probiotics Representative can help you on mycotoxin binders available.

11. Rearing good quality healthy calves and achieving growth targets sets up the life production of the cow. Many producers think that improving this area is a cost but short term savings can be made by way of reducing mortalities. Performance Probiotics has a 5 step "Optimum Calf Rearing" program that is simple to follow with producers having great success. Your Performance Representative can guide you through this program.

Many of the simple things are forgotten or not known during challenging times so I hope these steps assist you to better look at your operation and make the necessary gains and or savings to your operation. Performance Probiotics is here to help you through.

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