



Dairy Briefs

The Latest Information
on Dairy Cattle Nutrition



Are Incentives Worth It?

Laura Martin, M.Sc

Incentive Days... every time I turn around it seems like there is another increase in incentive days. For now, we are at 3 extra days a month until the end of October (Table 1), which totals to around a 12% increase in production since February. That is a lot of extra milk, and the potential for an extra boost in income. But are incentive days worth the trouble?

Table 1: 2015 Incentive Days

Incentive Days	
March 2015	2 production incentive days
April 2015	2 production incentive days
May 2015	3 production incentive days
June 2015	3 production incentive days
July 2015	3 production incentive days
August 2015	3 production incentive days
September 2015	3 production incentive days
October 2015	3 production incentive days
November 2015	2 production incentive days

DFO, May 1, 2015

Ration changes to increase milk production are often costly. Feeding extra feed (dry matter intake) to get more milk is a common solution. However, feeding more of everything can add up, cost-wise. Tweaking different areas of the ration can also increase ration costs. Increasing the protein level of the ration, or adding by-pass protein can be quite costly. Feeding less forage to push the cows for more milk means higher off-farm costs. Increasing the proportion of corn silage in the diet, and reducing haylage, means that not only is the protein in the ration increasing but less of the protein is coming from forage. This will then need to be replaced by an off-farm protein blend. Pushing the cows harder can also mean increasing the risk of acidosis and can drop the butterfat in milk. Adding extra additives, like sodium bicarbonate, or a by-pass fat, to help keep the butterfat consistent, even with more milk, also costs more money.

Cont. >>

Inside this Issue...

Are Incentives Worth It?

By: Laura Martin, M. Sc, Nutritionist



**Make the Most of Your
Incentive Days**



**firstSTART®C creates consistent
and steady growth and
development of calves by:**

- Supplying protein from milk origin, so it's easily digested
- Balancing with synthetic amino acids to help optimize average daily gains
- Providing optimum vitamin and trace mineral levels, including A, D, E & B Vitamins necessary for normal growth and health

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With all of these extra costs adding up does the extra income generated from incentives days translate into a profit...or a loss? Example rations were run for a farm filling quota with 30 kg of milk/cow/day in February. To meet the new 12% increase in production the cows on this farm would now need to produce almost 34 kg of milk/day, keeping the percent butterfat the same. New rations were run for this farm to fill these incentives (Table 2). All of the above recommended changes were made to push the cows for more milk.

Table 2: ROFC for Incentive Production

	30 kg	34 kg
Straw (kg)	0.50	0.50
Haylage (kg)	14.90	12.30
Corn Silage (kg)	14.90	18.50
Dry Corn (kg)	4.90	5.10
Soybean Meal (kg)	1.76	2.54
DDGS (kg)	0.88	0.85
Canola Meal (kg)	0.88	0.85
Vitamin/Mineral Premix (kg)	0.56	0.67
Bypass Fat (kg)	--	0.20
Dry Matter Intake	21.02	22.25
Crude Protein (% DM)	17.00	17.50
NDF (% DM)	33.00	31.70
ADF (% DM)	20.40	19.00
Starch (% DM)	23.10	24.20
NE Lactation (Mcal/kg)	1.64	1.69
Milk Production (L)	30.00	34.00
Milk Value	\$ 0.73	\$ 0.73
Feed Cost per Head per Day	\$ 5.43	\$ 6.24
Return Over Feed Cost	\$ 16.59	\$ 18.71

*** Costs derived from OMAFRA Weekly Hog Market Facts (June 1, 2015), Corn Silage \$46/T; Haylage \$135/T; Straw \$220/T**

The rations were then run through a Return Over Feed Costs (ROFC) program. ROFC programs allow producers to monitor feed costs and keep track of farm profitability, by telling producers how much milk income is left after accounting for feed costs. Using current market costs, the 30 kg production ration is \$0.81 cheaper per cow per day than the ration for higher production. The extra cost of feed, from May until the end of October (only considering the months with 3 incentive days), would total almost \$15,000 on a 100-cow herd. Assuming both rations result in the same milk components (provide the same value of milk), buffers and dry palm fat have been added to the 34 kg diet to help stabilize butterfat, the 34 kg production ratio actually returns \$2.12 more per cow per day than the lower production ration. For the same 6 month time period for a 100-cow herd that totals over \$39,000 increase in ROFC.

Getting extra production out of the cows is more profitable, even after accounting for the higher feed costs. So take this opportunity and fill those incentives to maximize your profits for the year!

summerSTART

Specifically formulated to help prepare dairy animals to combat the effects of summer heat with the addition of key ingredients to the ration.

Heat stress affects most dairy animals during the summer. Once the temperature reaches 26°C (80°F), dry matter intake, milk yield and reproductive performance can decline.

Studies have shown that ruminants require more sodium and potassium during hot weather. This may be partially due to the extra intake of water and greater urinary excretion. The increased requirements for potassium has been attributed to greater excretion of potassium in sweat.

peakSTART

Designed specifically to allow for greater feed intake, increased feed efficiency and improved milk production in fresh cows.

peakSTART® is ideally suited for starting off high-producing dairy cows. More and more modern dairy farms are setting up fresh cow groups to adapt newly calved cows to the high group ration. The fresh cow group would be an ideal place to add peakSTART®. Getting fresh cows off to a good start in lactation will help maintain dry-off. By targeting the cows that matter, costs can be reduced and potential income increased.

microbiSTART

Gives fresh cows extra energy and the essential nutrients for a speedy recovery from calving.

microbiSTART® is a unique product containing very high quality, palatable ingredients such as yeasts, sugars, calcium propionate, sodium bicarbonate, niacin, naturally-occurring microorganisms, potassium chloride, magnesium oxide and a natural flavouring agent. This product contains other essential nutrients and has been developed specifically for use when fresh cows need additional energy.





SILO GUARD® II

FORAGE ADDITIVE FOR ALFALFA,
CORN SILAGES AND BALED HAY



WE USE SILO GUARD® II TO PRESERVE MORE OF WHAT WE WORKED SO HARD TO PRODUCE. BECAUSE QUALITY SILAGE IS VALUABLE, SILO GUARD® II IS A VERY WORTHWHILE INVESTMENT.



Mathieu Patenaude
Gillette Farms Inc.
Embrun, ON

Gillette Farms Inc. is located in Embrun, Ontario. They have a 450 head milking herd and a total of 1100 animals. They have also had the great achievement of raising and working with the new World Record lifetime milk producer Gillette E Smurf. Mathieu Patenaude of Gillette Farms had some great things to say about Silo Guard® II forage additive for Alfalfa, Corn Silages and Baled Hay:

"At Gillette Farms we pride ourselves in raising cattle that have great conformation so that they are well equipped to have a productive life. But this is only part of the equation. To get great production we need to feed top quality ingredients on a consistent basis.

This is why we put a high importance on our silage production. We have found that Silo Guard® II is the best product to help us achieve superior silages. With Silo Guard® II, the benefits are readily visible. Better preservation of the silage both on top of the bunk and in the mass. Reduced heating at the silage face and at feed out and sweeter smelling silage.

We use Silo Guard® II to preserve more of what we worked so hard to produce. Because quality silage is valuable, Silo Guard® II is a very worthwhile investment. Try it today!"



CALL YOUR KENPAL OR ISF REP TODAY FOR MORE INFORMATION!



WE APPRECIATE YOUR BUSINESS

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