



Unlocking the Potential For Peak Milk

Grouping & Pen Moves

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- Grouping (Fresh cows, early lactation & open cows, bred cows, late lactation cows, dry cows, close-up cows) is part of our housing, breeding and lactation management. How can we best manage pen moves?
- Any and every pen move equals STRESS [lower feed intake, less lying time, drop in milk production].
- Every pen move means not only adapting to a new social ordering but also new stalls, new feeding spaces, new ration, and new time schedules = stress.
- If a sick pen is used (high turnover), minimizing days in pen results in best stress management.
- In other pens (lower rates of turnover) maximizing days in pen results in best stress management.
- Impact on lactating cows is less when first lactation cows are housed separately from 2nd and greater lactation cows.
- Milk production losses due to pen moves are least when groups of cows are moved at one time compared to individual cow moves.
- Current research suggests that moving cows as a group after afternoon milking is less stressful than morning moves.

References: K. Norland and Others, "Commingling Dairy Cows: Pen Moves, Stocking Density, and Health." 39th Proceedings of Am. Assoc. Bovine Practitioners. 2006 pp 36-42. M.A.G. von Keyserlingk and Others, "Acute Behavior Effects of Regrouping Dairy Cows." Journal of Dairy Science 91:1011-1016. R. J. Grant and J. LO. Albright "Effect of Animal Grouping on Feeding Behavior and Intake of Dairy Cattle." Journal of Dairy Science 84(E. Suppl.) E156-E163.

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