

# AVA Newsletter



September 2015

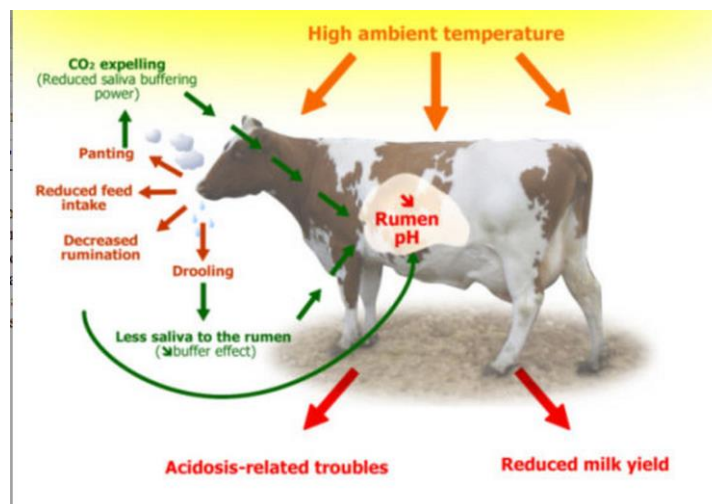
## Congratulations!

We would like to congratulate all participants of local and regional 4H and agricultural shows. It is our pleasure to help you achieve your goals. A few notable achievements include:

- Mary Sweeney was on the New York State Dairy judging team that placed first at the Harrisburg All-American Dairy Show. She placed 5<sup>th</sup> individually.
- Angie George will be headed to Louisville with the NYS Dairy Judging Team
- Colleen Perl will be headed to the World Dairy Expo with the NYS Dairy Judging Team

## It's Almost Fall!

Just because the nights are cooling off does not mean that cows are out of the woods for heat stress. Cows are susceptible to heat stress any time the temperature index rises above 68°F. Consequences of heat stress include decreased dry matter intake, decreased milk production, poor demonstration of heat cycling, and poor conception rates. Feeding during cooler hours can affect both feed quality and feed intake. The use of high quality forage in diets can reduce additional body heat generated during digestion and assimilation of less available nutrients.



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## Water: The Most Important Nutrient for Young Calves

Water is an inexpensive nutrient. However, water can be labor-intensive to deliver, especially those that are individually housed in hutches or pens. Is it really worth the effort to provide clean free-choice water to preweaned calves?

When calves drink milk, the esophageal groove shunts the milk directly into the abomasums, bypassing the first three stomach compartments. However, when the calf drinks water, it ends up in the first stomach, the rumen.

Water in the rumen helps maintain a slurry that ferments. Fermentation encourages papillae growth in the rumen. Bigger papillae improve absorption of nutrients. Coincidentally, older calves provided free-choice water eat more calf starter grain and achieve higher rates of gain. Additionally, water in the rumen helps replace water lost by urinating, defecating, breathing, and sweating.

### **How soon and how much?**

Many dairies start feeding free-choice water at day one while others wait until day 3 or 5. “Early” is the general rule of thumb. How much water? The youngest calves may drink less than one pint daily. Calves who are being weaned may drink as much as eight quarts per day.

Do calves need water at night? Absolutely. We often feed on a 10-14 or 8-16 hour interval schedule. Do we want calves to be without water for 14-16 hours/day? Water is particularly important in the summer and early fall, when calves drink more water than during cooler temperatures. The oldest calves on milk who are in the process of being weaned often more than double their water consumption, drinking up to 10 quarts daily. If weaned calves are kept in an individual pen or hutches after weaning, consider using a five-gallon pail for water during warm weather (any temp over 75°F).

Cleanliness of water is also an important focus. Research has documented nearly an extra 0.25 lbs daily gain for calves fed clean water compared to calves whose pails were only cleaned every other week.

