



Pipeline

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Manure Injection

Adding Value for Farms Large & Small

WHILE MILK PRICES APPEAR TO BE HEADED UP FOR 2022, so too are farm input prices. With input costs rising, manure injection – a farming method using a piece of equipment that injects manure several inches under the soil surface – can become a feasible option for many producers to lower costs as well as elevate crop yields. This practice is an exceptional environmental solution, and has become a focus for Maryland & Virginia’s sustainability team.

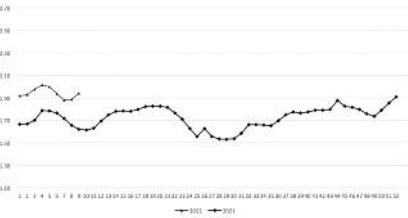
Why Try Manure Injection? Nitrogen is having an exceptionally volatile 2022. This along with phosphorus and potassium may be up as much as 80 percent according to a recent Texas A&M study. The study showed that prices crossed the \$1,000/ton mark earlier this year. The same study found that this year’s costs could increase the average costs per acre at a feed grain farm by about \$39 an acre.

With the input costs up, manure injection may help farmers utilize resources they already have. First, injecting manure can help retain the full amount of the input instead of losing some to the atmosphere. Secondly, the injection process may remove the need for side dressed nitrogen, which will have much higher costs this year.

See *Manure Injection* page 4

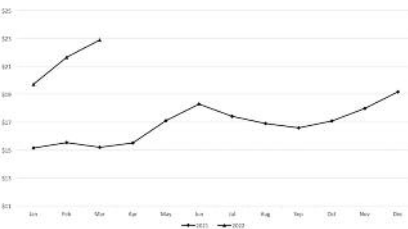
Markets At-A-Glance

NASS Cheese Price



The NASS Block Cheddar price for February 26, 2022 is 1.9397, which is \$0.32 higher than the February 2021 price.

Class I Mover



The March Class I Mover is \$22.88, up \$1.19 from the February price of \$21.64. That price is up \$7.68 from a year ago.

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Daniela Roland, *Editor* - droland@mdvamilk.com
Taylor Mickelberry, *Contributor* - tmickelberry@mdvamilk.com
Amanda Culp, *Contributor* - aculp@mdvamilk.com
Ann Marie Ternullo, *Creative Director, Contributor*

HEADQUARTERS:

1985 Isaac Newton Square West, Suite 200
Reston, Virginia 20190-5094
800-552-1976 phone / 757-952-2370 fax
Dial Line 800-485-8067
www.mdvamilk.com

OFFICERS:

Kevin Satterwhite, <i>President</i>	Jay Bryant, <i>CEO, Treasurer & Secretary</i>
David Pool, <i>First Vice President</i>	Jon Cowell, <i>Assistant Treasurer</i>

To receive Pipeline as an e-newsletter by fax or email, contact the Communications Dept. at 800-552-1976 or info@mdvamilk.com.

Maryland & Virginia
2022 Annual Meeting & Leadership Conference
March 29-30, 2022
Turf Valley Resort, Ellicott City, Maryland

OUR SCHEDULE:

March 29 – An exciting day of learning the latest about dairy industry opportunities including consumer trends and our Maola brand, the latest on animal care, and what’s happening for dairy on Capitol Hill. Our evening dinner features keynote speaker Tara Vander Dussen (*see profile below*).

March 30 – We’ll conduct our formal business meeting where you will learn about, and influence, important business operations.

The deadline to register and reserve hotel rooms is **MARCH 9**.

For more information: Go to the Member Portal at mdvamilk.com/annualmeeting.
Questions? Contact Paula Leventhal at pleventhal@mdvamilk.com or 703-742-7414.
Can’t attend in person? The formal business meeting will be held virtually at the same time. Call the Reston Office to register at 1-800-552-1976.

ABOUT KEYNOTE SPEAKER TARA VANDER DUSSEN:



Popularly known as the ‘*New Mexico Milkmaid*’ on social media, Tara Vander Dussen is a passionate advocate for modern dairy farming. Tara shares her stories about life on her family dairy through her blog and social media platforms. *New Mexico Milkmaid* has a community of more than 60,000 followers. By using her voice, she hopes to change people’s perceptions of farmers and dairy farming. Tara has spoken on the topic of dairy sustainability at national and global conferences, including the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization Committee on World Food Security and the Forbes AgTech Summit.

Annual Meeting – *Less than One Month Away!*



INSTALLMENT #1
Farm Security Basics

This first installment of our Tips series is focused on farm security. These six tips, courtesy of the Animal Agriculture Alliance, can help protect you and your farm from being a target of animal rights group and, if you are faced with an issue, can help you be prepared with action items.

The most important step to take is ensuring that you have no vulnerabilities in terms of animal care or environmental impact that could be exploited. It’s about “YouTube-proofing” your operation and making sure there is nothing going on that you wouldn’t want broadcasted to the world. Activists have shown they are more than willing to exaggerate, fabricate or share information out of context. You don’t want to provide them with any ammunition to use against you.

TIP 1
Make yourself a difficult target



Take basic steps to secure your farm and facility, making it more difficult to access by intruders. These include using No Trespassing signs, motion-sensor lighting, security cameras, gates, locks, and fencing.

TIP 2
Use caution when hiring

Activists are constantly trying to get hired on farms. Never cut corners in your hiring process regardless of how urgently you need workers. Have a formal process including a written application and carefully check references by calling past employers’ main number – not the one listed on their application. Be sure you are complying with all federal and state laws regarding hiring.



TIP 3
Implement a policy for handling visitors and requests for information

Activists will use any excuse to try to access a farm or facility, including misrepresenting their identity. Do not allow any unauthorized visitors to come onto your property for any reason and do not take claims at face value. Ask for credentials or identification and verify any claims (for example, call the company they claim to represent). If an unexpected visitor claims to be a state agency, request identification and call the agency to confirm that it sent an inspector. If a visitor claims to be law enforcement, ask to see a warrant before allowing any search of your property. Make sure all family members and employees know this process too and follow it every single time. Visitors who you have determined to be legitimate should be accompanied at all times. If you do have a suspicious visitor come to your property, report the incident immediately to your state association or MDVA. Provide as much detail as possible – vehicle information (including license plate #), names and descriptions of people, overview of the incident, etc.

TIP 4
Consider what is visible from the road

Some groups are encouraging activists to monitor farms from public property to see if they can obtain photos or videos that can be used. Consider the “curb appeal” of your operation and make any possible changes to prevent sensitive procedures from being viewed from public land or roadways.



sure everyone understands the issues and how to handle different situations. Activist groups are carefully targeting both employees and farmers and encouraging them to become



“whistleblowers” to help “take down” the industry, sometimes with a financial incentive. Employees should be very suspicious of anyone new in their lives who seems particularly inquisitive about their work (asking for photos, requesting an after-hours tour, persistent questions, etc.). Something to be aware of – activist groups use encrypted messaging platforms like Signal and Telegram to communicate. If you have concerns about an employee, consider searching their phone number within these platforms. If they have an account, it could be a red flag that they are communicating with activists.

TIP 6
Consider cyber-security

In addition to coming onto farms and properties, activists are also looking for ways to infiltrate agricultural businesses using technology. Make sure you are protecting your company and employees from this by controlling access to company computers, installing spam filters and coaching employees on what to do about suspicious emails, using up-to-date software security tools including firewalls and limit even employee access to truly sensitive information. Limit employees’ phone and computer usage when on-site to what is truly necessary.



MDVA works closely with the Animal Agriculture Alliance and has access to additional resources for members. Ensuring the safety of your family, animals, employees and property is important. If you would like more information or are ever faced with an animal activist incident, contact your MDVA Field Rep.



“INJECTION captures nitrogen that is essentially nitrogen they’ve already paid for on their farm,” says Dr. Heather Karsten, a researcher and Associate Professor at Penn State. “And rather than lose a significant portion of the nitrogen that is in that manure to the atmosphere, they can inject it to capture more of it.”

Karsten says rough estimates that some farms find that up to 30 percent of the nitrogen already in dairy manure is lost to the atmosphere by broadcast spreading without incorporation compared to injecting.

The injection process can even provide better yields despite lowering the total amount of nitrogen applied in a growing season because of the better utilization of the banked elements already in the soil. Fields that use cover crops and legumes may especially benefit from injection, particularly if manure is applied prior to cover crop planting in fall or to growing cover crops in spring.

Maryland & Virginia member David Doody has been injecting manure for more than seven years on his Union Bridge, Maryland farm. Each year, he moved around 700,000 gallons to his crop acreage. Doody grows corn and soybeans on more than 100 acres.

“It doesn’t go anywhere,” he says of the manure after injection. “You’re getting it all with this program and not losing any to the rain or the wind blowing it around.”

Doody said his yields have increased since beginning injection on his farm. “We’re going to be 100 percent injection this year because that [injector] is a nice piece of equipment. And you know you did a good thing for the environment. It’s a good deal all the way around.”

Karsten suggests looking at an individual nutrient management plan or doing early season nitrogen availability assessments to determine how manure injection may benefit a certain farm. Farms that have had manure applied at consistently high rates in the past may not see a change in crop yields.

But for a farm using no-and-reduced till, rotational perennials, and cover crops, Karsten says there’s a high likelihood that they have a large pool of organic nitrogen and nitrogen cycling,

eliminating the need for side dressed nitrogen in the high-priced environment of 2022.

“When we sample some of these farms, we find they’re often nutrient rich soils, both in nitrogen and phosphorus,” she says. “Buying additional fertilizer is often not cost effective, especially now that nitrogen fertilizer prices are so high.”

The Sustainability Advantage

There is an additional advantage to manure injection that goes far beyond the boundaries of the farm. Manure injection can be a boon for the environment too. Nitrogen that is lost to the atmosphere also becomes a problem for waterways like the Chesapeake Bay.

“The unfortunate problem is that nitrogen comes back down somewhere in the watershed or in another nearby watershed in precipitation,” Karsten says. “But that’s not a good thing because it’s contributing to water pollution somewhere.”

Manure injection can also help keep waterways clean by preventing surface water pollution due to runoff.

“When manure runs off, what’s very prone to loss is phosphorus in the manure,” Karsten adds. This can contribute to algae blooms and nutrient enrichment of the waterways which can be detrimental to fish and aquatic organisms.

Thanks to the growing research on the positive environmental impact, injection has received increasing attention – and funding -- from local and state level groups. Many are supporting the practice to benefit the environment, the farm and the crops themselves.

“Maryland & Virginia’s sustainability partners, the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay and Sustainable Chesapeake, have been working diligently to access grant funds and to aid members in utilizing current funding options,” says Janae Klingler, Manager of Animal Care and Sustainability. “Both the state of Virginia and the state of Maryland have cost share programs that will help to reduce the out-of-pocket cost for manure injection and Pennsylvania has the REAP tax credit program.



Photo right by Kristen Hughes Evans.

Costs To Consider

There are costs to consider with manure injection. Injection will require a custom applicator in most situations. Overall, that will command a higher cost than surface application with needed fuel and additional labor costs.

And time may vary in how long injection takes. Some farms may find that it takes longer to inject the field compared to surface applying.

But with resources available to help offset additional labor costs, combined with the crop and environmental benefits, the chance for producers to explore the practice may not come at a better time.

Doody has taken advantage of programs from the Maryland Department of Agriculture and from the cooperative. “Maryland has great programs to help transport manure and they kick in for the injection,” he says. Doody adds that his out-of-pocket costs are limited thanks to these programs.

Options for Amish Farms

Manure injection is also expanding into farms in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. The Lancaster County Conservation District (LCCD) worked with the Campbell Foundation to secure a grant to cover some manure injection costs. As part of those costs, ELS Manufacturing helped fabricate a horse-drawn unit that is targeted towards use

Photos left and below by Shelly Dehoff.



Maryland & Virginia is proud to partner with organizations to supply our members with opportunities for manure injection grants and cost share programs. MDVA has received grants for manure injection in Pennsylvania, Virginia and Maryland. For information contact Marisa Little at mlittle@mdvamilk.com or 240-549-9795, or your Sustainability Specialist.

VIRGINIA: Virginia offers cost share funding to reimburse manure injection at \$45/acre. Alternatively, producers can seek a state tax credit around 25%. To sign up, contact your local Soil & Water Conservation District.

MARYLAND: The Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) offers cost-share grants to hire custom applicators, rent or lease equipment, or offset operating costs relating to manure inject. The rate is up to \$45/acre. To apply, contact your Soil Conservation District.

PENNSYLVANIA: In Lancaster County, producers can apply to an incentive payment program with the Lancaster County Conservation District (LCCD). Reimbursement is available for up to \$40/acre for custom application or \$50 for equipment rental. For more information, contact Shelly Dehoff at the LCCD at 717-880-0848 or shellydehoff@lanasterconservation.org.

OTHER PA COUNTIES: The Pennsylvania Resource Enhancement & Protection grant program is a statewide first-come, first-served program that enables farmers, businesses, and landowners to earn income tax credits to offset the cost of implementing conservation practices. For more information and the application, visit <https://bit.ly/MDVAPAREAP>.

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HAVE YOU HEARD?

DAIRY NEWS FROM AROUND THE INDUSTRY



OUR MISSION

To be a sustainable cooperative that maximizes value to our farmer-owners, employees, and customers.

Pennsylvania Launches Crisis Hotline for Farmers

HOTLINE OPEN 24/7
(833)897-2474

The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture launched a free crisis hotline specifically for farmers and other members of the state's agricultural community. The AgriStress Help Line is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The number is 833-897-2474. The staff answering the hotline has received training specifically on agricultural stressors. "What we're excited about is the staff answering that line understand farming," said Natalie Roy, executive director of AgriSafe Network, a national nonprofit aimed at reducing health disparities in agricultural communities. "They're not going to tell a dairy farmer to take a two-week vacation." The hotline is the first

of its kind in terms of a crisis helpline specifically designed for farmers, Roy said. When someone calls the hotline, they'll be asked to put in their ZIP code first. The call will then be routed directly to a trained crisis specialist. All calls are confidential. Callers will be offered a follow-up call in 24 hours to check in and explore further options and resources. If the caller can't answer or changes their mind about receiving the call, staff will leave a message that won't reveal the nature of the call if someone else picks up or hears the message. — *Farm and Dairy*

2021 Best Year for U.S. Dairy Exports

2021 was the best year ever for U.S. dairy exports, which were up 10% in volume and 18% in value from the previous year. A rebound in exports to Mexico and a sharp increase in whey and milk powder to China led widespread gains and new records, according to the U.S. Dairy Export Council. Total U.S. dairy export volume reached 2.3 million metric tons of milk solids equivalent to break the record volume of 2020, and total export value surpassed the highs of 2014 to reach \$7.75 billion. Cheese volumes also beat the 2014 record with a final total of 404,675 metric tons. Nonfat dry milk and skim milk powder beat the volume record set in 2020 to reach nearly 900,00 metric tons, and whey exports reached a new high of 613,943 metric tons. Dairy exports set multiple other market and product records as well. "Indeed, by all metrics, 2021 was a tremendous success for U.S. dairy exports," William Loux, USDEC director of global trade analysis, said in a year-end report. U.S. dairy exporters managed to find success despite substantial headwinds from logistics, he said. "Lack of trucking availability, shortages of equipment and containers, carrier companies ignoring export orders for blank loads and, most recently, declining productivity at ports have all taken their toll on U.S. exports — even though U.S. exports have clearly been positive," he said. — *Capital Press*



MDVA FIELD REPRESENTATIVES

Rebecca Bush | 443-693-2840
rbush@mdvamilk.com

Bob Cooksey | 410-708-7899
bcooksey@mdvamilk.com

Kelli Davis | 301-471-4152
kdavis@mdvamilk.com

Rachel Detwiler | 814-660-6972
rdetwiler@mdvamilk.com

Carl Espenshade | 717-360-7298
cespenshade@mdvamilk.com

Ernie Fisher | 301-788-4154
efisher@mdvamilk.com

Cody Holden | 570-728-0535
cholden@mdvamilk.com

Laura Jackson | 540-272-0140
ljackson@mdvamilk.com

Dave Kleintop | 717-756-6945
dkleintop@mdvamilk.com

Peter Schaefer | 717-756-6949
pschaefer@mdvamilk.com

TANK CALIBRATOR

Joe Weber | 717-377-2702
webertankcal@gmail.com

ANIMAL CARE & SUSTAINABILITY

Janee Klingler, Mgr. | 717-305-8257
jklingler@mdvamilk.com

Hannah Walmer, Specialist | 717-304-7967
hwalmer@mdvamilk.com

Marisa Little, Specialist | 240-549-9795
mlittle@mdvamilk.com