



Pea Facts–Dairy Cattle

- **Dual Feed:** Peas are unique in the sense they offer exceptional amounts of protein and energy wrapped up in one package. The protein content of peas ranges from 18% to 28%, with an average of 24%, which is comparable to wheat middlings or sunflower meal. Energy content is comparative with barley and corn at 87% total digestible nutrients. When choosing grain sources for your cattle ration, producers need to be aware of the protein and energy content. Peas provide both protein and energy, where other commodities may only provide adequate amounts of one.
- **Stable Rumen:** Pea protein is rapidly degraded in the rumen, but the starch is slowly degraded. Therefore, peas may support better production in cows fed hay-based diets. Supplementing hay diets with grains that are fermented at a high rate (barley, wheat, or oats) to dairy cows may cause major changes in rumen function such as low pH levels. This may cause reduction in milk production, reductions in hay intake, and digestive disorders. However, peas are slowly fermented in the rumen, keeping the pH of the rumen at a safe level, actually promoting higher milk fat concentrations.
- **Milk Composition:** The low degradation rate of non-structured carbohydrates in peas has been found to lead to increased milk fat percentages during all stages of lactation. Milk protein percentage and yield are not affected at any stage of lactation when peas were used in the diet instead of soy/canola meal, when the diets were balanced for by-pass protein.
- **Sole Source of Protein:** Peas can be the sole source of protein in dairy cows during late lactation or in a herd with moderate milk production. When adding peas as a protein supplement to young, high producing dairy cows, an additional protein source containing by-pass protein may need to be added to the diet. When the diet is properly balanced, peas fit very well in any dairy diet.
- **Cattle Like ‘em:** Peas are extremely palatable. This is important in young animals that are offered grain rations for the first time, where high intakes are a must. Researchers at North Dakota State University and in Europe have found that feed intake is generally increased when peas are added to the diet.



For more information, please contact:

Larry E. White, Marketing Director
1710 Burnt Boat Drive
Bismarck, ND 58503
701-222-0128
white@northernpulse.com