Focus On Protein In Fresh Cow Diets

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During the last 3 weeks of gestation, energy requirements increase due to fetal development and colostrum production. The mammary gland at 4 days postcalving increases demands for glucose by 3 times, amino acids by 2 times, and fatty acids by 3 times when compared to the uterus at 250 days of gestation.

At the same time, dry matter (DM) intake is reduced at the beginning of lactation. This mismatch between nutrient intake and demand generates a negative energy balance toward the end of the pregnancy that is prolonged for several weeks after calving.

Dry matter intake in fresh cows is insufficient to support lactation. A recent study published in the Journal of Dairy Science evaluated the effects of feeding increased dietary crude protein on productive performance and metabolism in
fresh cows.

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