



MOOSLETTER

President: Dan Edgington **Vice President:** Shawn White **Treasurer:** Jeff Reusser **Secretary:** Katie Sears **Youth Director:** Renae Lizarraga

I Love My Dexter

By Renae Lizarraga

We love our Dexters. We give of ourselves and our resources to our four-hooved friends. In turn, they give to us as well. Not only do they give us milk and meat, but they give us memories and unforgettable stories that entertain and educate. We all remember the first cow that laid hoof on our farm, that one very special cow that drank motor oil, or that one REALLY LOUD cow at the cow show (Yeah, Mustard. We remember you). We love our cows, their antics, and all they have to offer us. But did you realize that how we interact with our cows affects their health, productivity and what they are able to give back to us?

Similar to humans, stress hinders the overall productivity and health of cattle. During times of anxiety, fear or pain, a stress hormone called cortisol becomes elevated. The heart rate increases and blood pressures rises. Cattle become agitated and restless, and sometimes bellow incessantly. High levels of stress can result in having sick cattle (and vet bills), stillbirth calves, decreased milk production, digestive upsets and weight loss, to name a few. Isolation, injury, hunger, thirst, extreme conditions and improper treatment are all examples of stressors.

It is helpful to understand that cattle (much like humans) are social creatures. Cows have best friends. They will form firm bonds with some fellow herd members, while avoiding others. Research has shown that cattle become stressed and agitated when separated from their favorite friends. When placed back with their favorite friend, their anxiety ceased and their heart rate and cortisol levels returned to a normal level.

In addition to having favorite cow friends, cattle manage much better when they are treated well by their human. Cows hold grudges and remember being mistreated and who mistreated them. Research has found that cows that have been given names and are treated individually have lower cortisol levels. Cows thrive when pampered as a pet, and not just treated as property.

Another plus side of a happy cow-human interaction: you're less likely to get injured! Happy cows are generally gentle and calm; they are not prone to agitation and anxiety, which can lead to injuries. According to at least one study, cattle cause an average of 22 deaths a year, while sharks cause an average of 6 deaths a year. Who would have thought!

There are many additional benefits to having comfortable and happy cows. According to studies, when cows are comfortable with their surroundings and their human, the quantity and quality of milk increases. When cows are stressed, their milk production decreases with the rise of cortisol. Additionally, calcium levels decrease, as well as omega-3 fatty acids.

The reality is that happy cows are healthier cows. Cows with lower cortisol levels spend more time ruminating. More time ruminating means greater nutrient input. Less rumination time leads to digestive upsets, loss of digesting nutrients, and even leads to a loss of deep sleep. All of this in turn, negatively impacts a cow's overall health, reproductivity and productivity.

Ultimately, we are the one who benefit from managing our cattle's stressors. We'll have lower vet bills, both meat and milk will have higher nutritional values (which affects our health), beef and dairy yield will be greater (more profit for us), the risk of injuries decreases, AND we'll have an adorable-faced cow friend!

So what makes for a happy cow, you ask?

Nutritious food and clean water are a great start. Cattle need clean, dry bedding and comfortable shelter from the elements. Cattle will thrive on a stress-free environment with plenty of room to wander.

Having met their basic needs, spoil your cow! Cows like to be groomed. Much like many of us find it therapeutic to be massaged, cows also benefit from being touched. Cows enjoy being scratched, brushed, and groomed. It's calming to them. This is why we use will use a show stick to lightly scratch their belly or brisket while showing.

Cows also like treats! Our Dexters love a chunk of apple or carrot, as well as corn husks, or even a piece of bread. If you really want to pamper your cow, consider making Flame's favorite cookie recipe for your cow this Valentine's Day!

Flame's Crunch Cookies {Cow Treats}

Homemade treats to make a cow love you

Servings: 24 treats

Equipment

- Mixer
- Mini muffin tin
- Cookie scoop

Ingredients

- 2 cups grated carrots
- 1 packet instant oatmeal
- 1½ cups all-purpose flour
- ½ cups steel cut oats
- ½ cup molasses
- 2 tbsp oil
- Cooking spray

Instructions

Preheat oven to 350°.

Combine all ingredients using an electric mixer (hand mixer or stand mixer) until well-combined.

Grease a mini muffin tin with cooking spray.

Use a cookie scoop to scoop each cookie portion into the compartments of the muffin tin. Press down each cookie with the back of the cookie scoop.

Bake for about 25 minutes until the cookies are hard. Remove and cool on a wire rack.



I ❤️ MY DEXTER

Upcoming Event:

OVDDBA General and Show Meeting



February 18th at 11 AM

**Golden Coral Banquet Room
4750 E Main St
Whitehall, OH 43213**

Join us to participate in creating a special OVDDBA Youth scrapbook to display at the show in May!

While we will have a youth drawing for a prize this day, participation will also be recorded and your name will be entered in the heifer raffle at the show in May.

Youth Director Message:

February will pass quickly! Don't forget to finish the cow by-products project. It is due by February 28th.



A youth member asked if they were allowed to complete the project via PowerPoint. The answer is, "Yes!" Using technology in the place of art supplies is absolutely acceptable! Great question.

Have other questions or comments? Email me at OVDDBAyouth@gmail.com

Be Mine!



I love MOO!



Will moo be my valentine?



Happy Valentine's Day!