Some dairymen find that feeding grass silage during summer works better than chopping fresh grass daily. They take less risk with wet weather, which can keep them out of fields, and forage quality is more uniform throughout the summer. When using fresh green chopped grass, it's difficult to schedule the forage production program to give highest quality grass when needed.





With a drylot feeding operation you'll want to provide plenty of premium quality hay all the time. For many dairymen this is the secret to their excellent herd production averages. Efforts spent in growing, harvesting or buying premium quality forage can often make the difference between an 8,000 and a 10,000 plus herd average. Newer type ground-level hay storage buildings, from which cows can be self-fed, can save you a lot of time and let you handle more cows.



Here's a typical loafing barn used with drylot dairy operations in this part of the country. Cows are easy to keep clean in this type setup as long as the loafing area is kept wellbedded and adjoining concrete lots are kept clean. Loafing barn should provide 40 to 50 square feet of area per cow, depending on their size.



For a drylot dairy operation you'll need to provide plenty of lot and feeder space. Overcrowding can hurt production and create unnecessary management problems. Cows will need 24 to 30 inches of feeder space per head unless they have access to roughage all the time. In this case, they'll need only 15 to 18 inches each. In terms of lot space, figure on a minimum of 75 to 100 square feet per cow in addition to about 20 square feet of holding area near milking parlor.





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