

## Fecal Starch: A tool to measure and manage starch digestibility



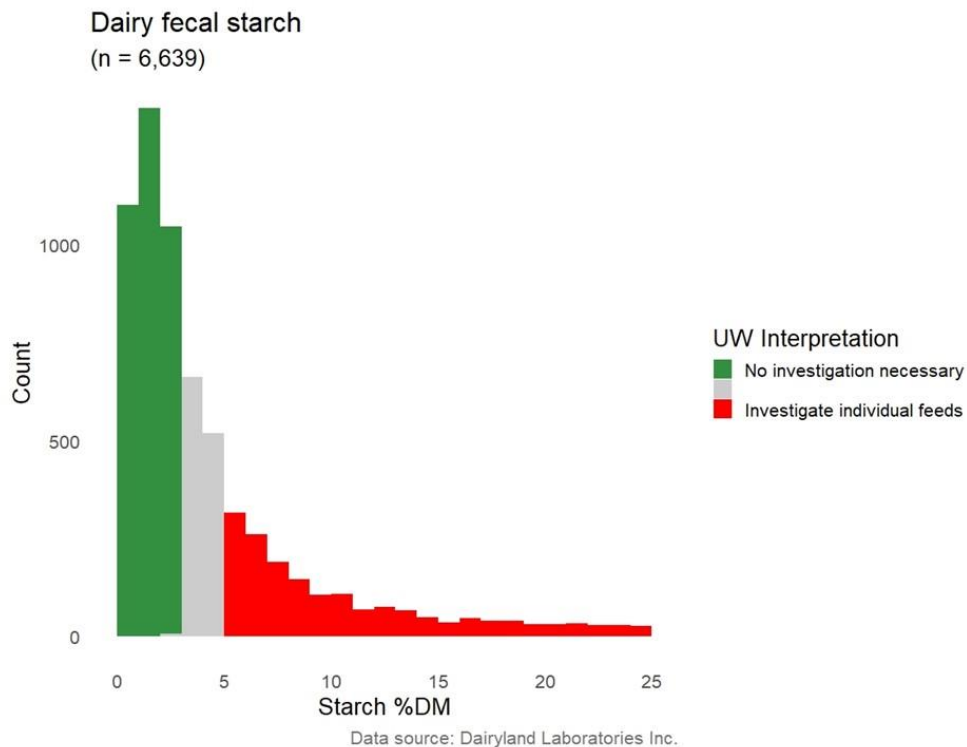
The amount of starch in fecal samples is highly related to total tract starch digestibility. Several published studies have found correlations between fecal starch and starch digestibility of 0.73-0.94, depending on the internal marker used in the study (Ferraretto et al, 2013; Fredin et al, 2014; Owens & Zinn, 2005).

A University of Pennsylvania study found each 1% unit increase in fecal starch was equivalent to 0.72 pounds of lost milk production (Ferguson, 2010).

For lactating dairy cows, recommendations from the University of Wisconsin suggest if there is less than 3% fecal starch, there is no need to investigate individual feeds (Ferraretto, 2023). If fecal starch values are greater than 3%, then individual feeds should be investigated for starch digestibility.

Fecal starch is available by NIR at all Dairyland Laboratories. Estimated turnaround time for a fecal starch test is 3 days in the lab.

The quick turnaround time and reasonable cost makes fecal starch analysis a useful tool for routine monitoring starch digestibility in dairy and beef feeding operations.



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