

Journal of Dairy Science Vol. 81 No. 5 1251-1261
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Trans-Octadecenoic Acids and Milk Fat Depression in Lactating Dairy Cows

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We examined the role of *trans*-octadecenoic acids in milk fat depression when low fiber diets were fed. The study consisted of four experimental periods with a 2 x 2 factorial arrangement of treatments to test the effects of dietary fat (saturated vs. unsaturated) and rumen fermentation (high fiber diets vs. low fiber diets) on milk fat depression. Dietary fiber concentration and type of fat had significant effects on milk fat. Effects were most pronounced when unsaturated fat was added to the low fiber diet. When the low fiber diet plus unsaturated fat was fed, milk fat percentage and yield were decreased by 30 and 35%, respectively, compared with the percentage and yield when the high fiber diet plus saturated fat was fed. Alterations in rumen fermentation caused by differences in dietary fiber concentrations had little effect on the amount of *trans*-octadecenoic acids in milk fat, and the total amount did not correlate with changes in milk fat percentage. Further examination of the isomeric profile of *trans*-octadecenoic acid revealed substantial differences among the dietary treatments. Although the addition of unsaturated fat resulted in marked increases in the milk fat content of *trans*-11-octadecenoic acid, regardless of dietary fiber concentration, the low fiber diet plus unsaturated fat increased the content of *trans*-10-octadecenoic acid. This combination was also associated with a significant decrease in milk fat content and yield. When the low fiber diets were fed, circulating insulin concentrations were elevated, regardless of the type of fat supplement. However, marked milk fat depression occurred only when the low fiber diet was supplemented with unsaturated fat.

Key Words: *trans*-octadecenoic acids • insulin • milk fat depression • fat synthesis

Submitted on May 16, 1997

Accepted on December 22, 1997

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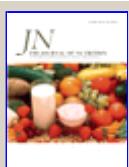
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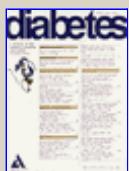
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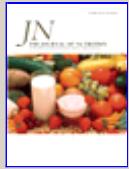
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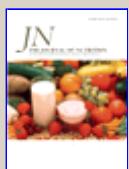
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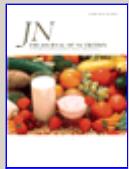
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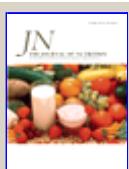
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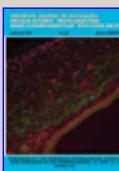
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