

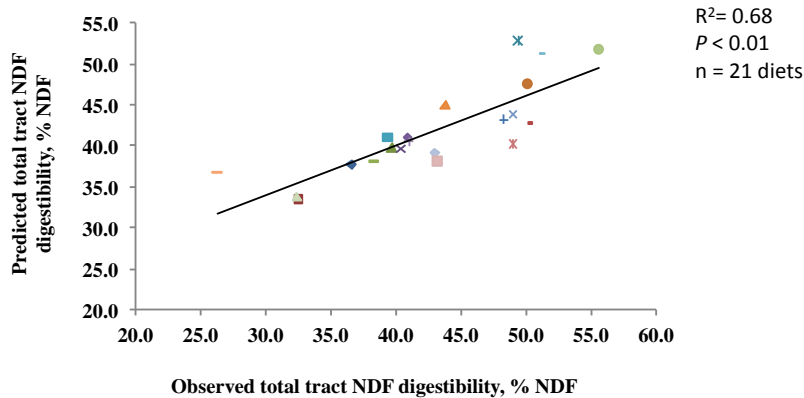
Using a New In Vitro Method and Fiber Model (TTNDFD) to Improve Estimates of Digestibility of Alfalfa for Dairy Cattle

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Fiber is an essential component of diets for dairy cattle. In high producing dairy cows, about 20 to 25% of the energy for milk production comes from digested fiber. Neutral detergent fiber (NDF) measures the total amount of fiber in a feed. NDF represents a 'bulky', slow to digest feed component, which can restrict feed intake and milk production. The digestibility of NDF also profoundly affects intake and milk production. Fiber digestibility can have a much greater impact on milk production than the digestibility of any other feed component.

A new in vitro lab assay has been developed by UW-Madison Dairy Scientists that predicts total tract NDF digestion in ruminants. The in vitro TTNDFD assay predicts NDF digestion of alfalfa, corn silage, grass forages and byproduct feeds. UW-Madison researchers have validated the accuracy of the in vitro TTNDFD test against directly measured NDF digestibility in lactating dairy cattle.

TTNDFD in vitro vs. in vivo



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Key words: Alfalfa, NDF digestibility, Dairy