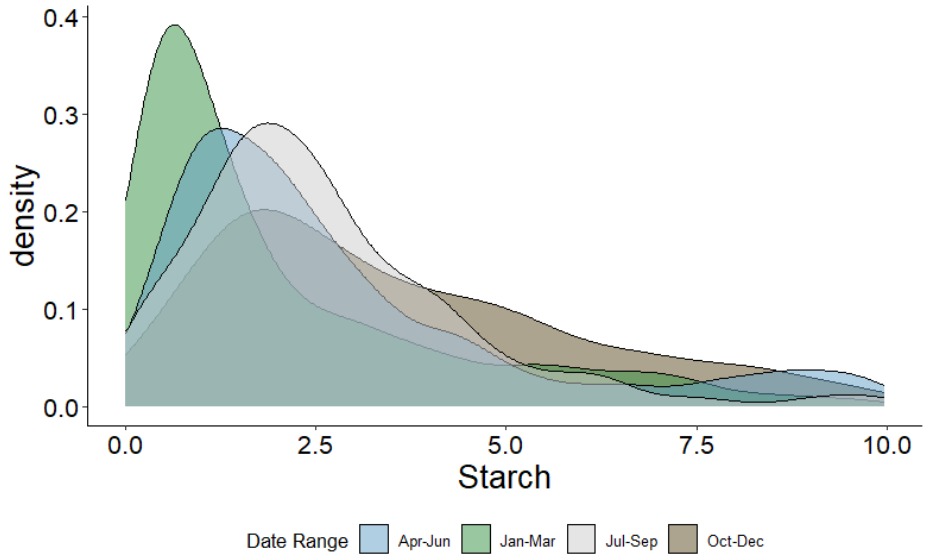
3 times to consider fecal starch testing

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Fecal starch is one of the most cost-effective tools available for monitoring diet performance but is often overlooked because it isn't a high frequency standard practice like forage testing. Here are 3 times to consider fecal starch testing on dairy farms:

1) December, March, and June
    - Starch digestibility changes over time as the ensiling process breaks down the protein matrix that naturally inhibits starch digestion. December, March, and June are good months to benchmark how much starch digestion has improved in ensiled feeds. (Figure 1.)
2) When intakes outpace production
    - When dry matter intakes are high relative to production, the root cause can be a lack of rapidly fermentable carbohydrates. In these situations, a fecal starch test can confirm if one or more of the starch sources is passing through undigested.
3) When changing starch sources
    - Testing fecal starch before and after switching silos, or changing between high moisture, dry, or steam-flaked corn or suppliers, is an easy way to compare how the new source performs to the previous.



For more information regarding fecal starch testing, contact Dairyland Labs at 608-323-2123 or info@dairylandlabs.com.