

New Approach Found For Milk Fat Testing

For the first time in nearly 80 years, milk fat testing in the United States may use a new approach. An instrument developed in Denmark, faster and safer than methods used since the 1890's, is making a bid for acceptance.

Testing of the Danish instrument is underway in university and industrial laboratories in several countries, according to

The fat and protein cause light to be scattered and absorbed throughout the solution.

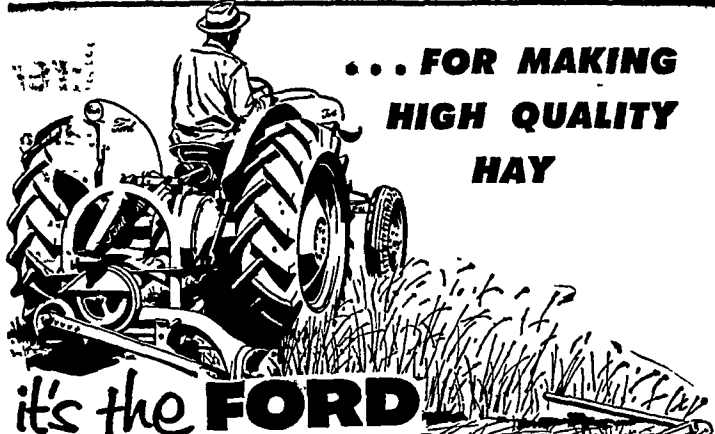
When the milk protein is dissolved and the remaining fat globules are homogenized to a uniform size, light dispersion and absorption depend only on the number of homogenized fat globules which are proportional to the fat content of the milk. Light passing through a sample is picked up by a photometer and indicated as milliamperes on a scale reading per cent fat.

Fat percentage of a milk sample can be determined in about 30 seconds, Dr. Kroger says. In contrast, the Babcock test and the Gerber test require about 20 minutes to determine fat content. No flammable solvents or acids are used in the Danish system as with the other methods.

Dr. Kroger and associates believe this Danish milk fat tester will be especially useful for milk companies handling large numbers of butterfat tests daily. It will also benefit the Dairy Herd Improvement Associations which test milk samples among herds in all states. Such testing helps to evaluate cow performance. In addition, federal, state, and local control agencies use milk fat tests to determine whether market milk has the required minimum fat content.

Manfred Kroger, assistant professor of food science at The Pennsylvania State University. If legally accepted, the new method will replace the present Babcock test and the Gerber test. The Danish instrument uses the principle that opaqueness of milk is caused by protein and fat globules suspended in emulsified form throughout the milk.

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John P. Meszaros, director of the Hershey Rose Gardens & Arboretum, announced that unseasonably warm weather has advanced by one week the peak bloom period of the 30,000 tulips. Best bloom is now expected from April 21 thru May 5.

Foot-Mouth Virus Separated

A more sensitive test for studying the structure of foot-and-mouth disease virus shows that a preparation of pure virus can be separated into two sub-strains, a U. S. Department of Agriculture scientist said recently.

Dr. Keith M. Cowan, a research microbiologist in USDA's Agricultural Research Service, said that the key to finding two viral sub-strains lies in studying antibodies in blood samples collected 7 days after a laboratory animal is infected with the disease. Ordinarily, the most sensitive tests are done with blood collected at least 30 days after infection. Dr. Cowan spoke before the annual meeting of the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology in Atlantic City, N.J.

A major problem confronting scientists who study foot and-

mouth disease is the great degree of differentiation of the causal virus. It has seven different serological types, compared with three types of polio virus. Each foot-and-mouth disease viral type has up to 25 sub-types, which in turn can be classed into a large number of strains. Dr. Cowan's research complicates the classification even further, by showing that there are sub-strains which have different chemical characteristics, causing them to produce separate antibodies.

It remains to be seen what the true nature of the two strains is, how they may influence the disease process, and whether vaccines prepared from them are equally good, Dr. Cowan said.

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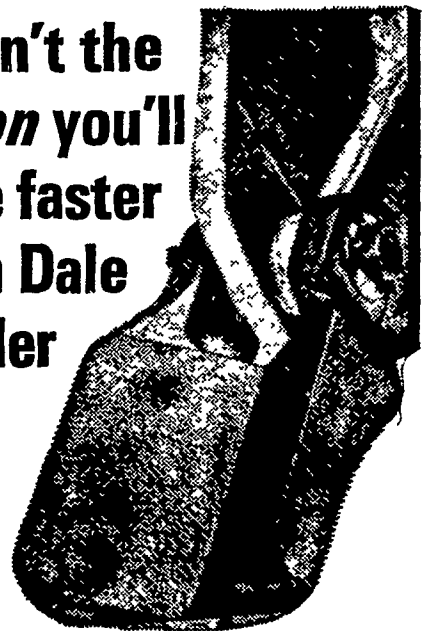
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