

Putting The Cow To Rest

By Using Nature's Way Of Drying Off A Cow

With all our knowledge of feeding the dairy cow, we still do not know exactly all the requirements of each individual. Consequently, for each quart or pound of milk the cow produces, she must steal some materials from her own body. Because of this body-stealing, every cow in the herd must occasionally be given a period of rest and renewal. During such a rest period, we must replace the materials she has stolen from her body if we expect her to increase production in the coming lactation. The time a cow stands dry is the most important period of her entire lactation. Therefore, we should give real thought to how we are going to stop the flow of milk and start her repairing and building up her body.

There are various ways of stopping the milk flow. Some dairymen practice what is known as the skip, strip, starve method. This involves intermittent milking, with a gradual shrinkage of the feed. Other dairymen go all out to get their cows dry by practicing the skip, strip starve, dehydration method. This involves taking away not only the cow's feed, but her water as well. Both of these methods usually are successful in drying the cow. But they are not good for the future herd because, while we are drying up the milk, we are also cutting down on the food going to the unborn calf. How much damage is done to the unborn calf is a question. But it could be considerable, since the calf at this point is just entering its most rapid growth period. Another disadvantage in practicing these methods of drying the cow is that by withholding her feed and water we are actually encouraging, in fact, demanding that she steal from her own body — the very thing we are trying to minimize by giving her a rest.

A Look at Nature's Way

What is the correct way of drying a cow? We are strong in advocating nature's way. Let's see how nature dries up a cow. First we should understand a few basic functions that take place in the cow. The blood that supplies the fats, other solids, and water required in making milk comes from the rear of the udder. It hesitates in the udder long enough to deposit its milk-making materials, then is carried through the mammary veins and into the body through the mammary wells to the lungs, and then to the heart to be pumped with more material for future work. The blood (approximately 80 pounds per cow) is continuous in its work and responds to the point of most insistence. When a cow is dry the demand on the blood is for body repair and building. When a cow is milking the demand is on making milk. When we dry off a cow, we change the requirement from milk making to body building.

Now, how do we dry off a cow using nature's methods? First of all, cows are creatures of habit and do not like change. So take her out of the stall she has grown used to and put her in a

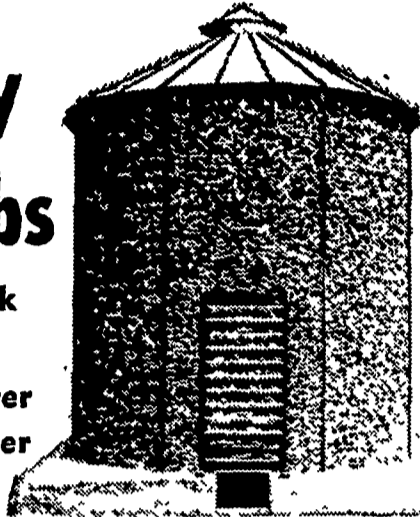
stall that is in a darkened part of the barn. Don't cut back on feed or water. Examine each of her quarters for infection (mastitis). If she is not infected, simply quit milking. At the end of seven days, milk the udder thor-

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oughly, massage it, and forget it. In the case of an injured or infected quarter, milk that quarter as often as possible (four or five times a day). At the end of seven days, it should be dry. — *Hornet Reporter.*

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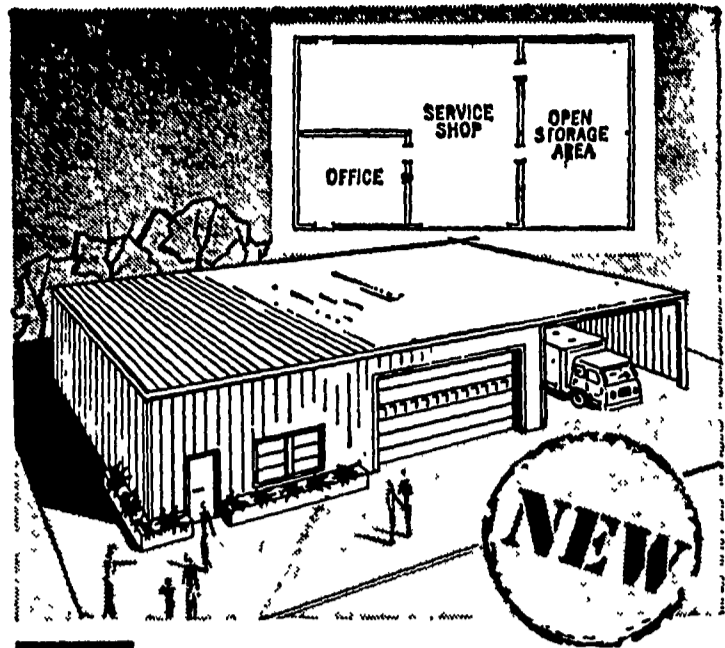
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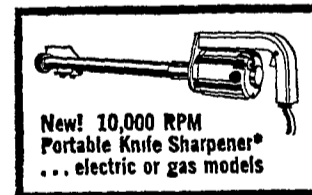
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