Highlights of Local 'Back to School' Milk Production Course

About 30 Eastern Lancaster County dairy farmers have been "back to school" studying ways of improving the quality and production of the milk their herds produce

Members of the Garden Spot Young Farmer Chapter have just completed a five week course on "Quality Milk Production" The course consisted of five meetings including. How Milk is Made, Sanitation of Dairy Equipment, Managed Milking and Barn Management, Herd Health, and Testing Milk for Quality

The main concern of the afrmer is to increase production without sacrificing quality of the product To do this the dairy farmer is finding it necessary to pay closer attention to detail in all aspects of his milking routine, according to Donald M Robinson, adult farmer instructor in the Eastern Lancaster County School District Robinson coordinated the instruction, speakers, films and field trips for the five-part course

Dr. Charles Levac of Penn Dairies demonstrates one of the tests that are run on every shipment of milk received at the dairy. The tests insure quality milk for the housewife.

Milking Equipment

Much concern was raised over the merit of various types of milking machines and systems and techniques of milking

The importance of correct vacuum levels, the stability of the vacuum at the teat end, the vacuum loss due to careless handling, the time required to properly prepare a cow and milk her, the anatomy of the udder and how it functions, and the selection of proper sanitizing agents were all stressed

The array of dairy equipment testing instruments available to the farmer through the dairy equipment dealer was pointed out. In turn, the farmers tried to point out to the equipment men that their services are often required at milking time to get the best results from their elaborate equipment

On Milking the Cow

All the guest speakers pointed out that one of the most important faults in dairying operations in general is leaving the milking machines on too long This often results when the farmer tries to handle too many cows at one time

If the machine is left on too long, it is working on an empty udder, which causes irritation and may lead to Mastitis.

Once a cow has been stimulated to produce milk and the let-down process has begun, the cow releases a hormone that lasts for about seven to eight minutes This hormone assists in releasing the milk If the milking is not completed within the seven to eight minutes, the machine must then do most of the work of the milking

If the milking is not done with the assistance of the cow, the process is harder on the cow's udder. It also reduces the efficiency of the milking operation.

Robinson stressed the importance of routine, of taking the milk at the same time each day. He explained that if the routine is interrupted, the milk making process will be delayed for that portion of the time which the routine is interrupted. This means that if the cow generally is milked a half-hour late or a half-hour early one day, that amount of time may be lost in production. This can be an important factor in determining overall production over a period of time.

Mastitis Control

The chief economic concern to the dairyman is the great loss in production and quality due to Mastitis, Robinson said.

Advances in the control of Mastitis were presented and discussed with emphasis on teat dipping and dry cow treatment as the most promising methods of control.

Guest speaker Dr. Walter Trumbauer, Ephrata Veterinarian, pointed out that experimental work on commercial herds using chlorine or iodine based teat dips after each milking, in combination with bacteria cultures of cows being turned dry, followed with appropriate treatment, has reduced incidences of Mastitis 80 to 90 per cent.

Dairymen trying teat dipping were warned not to give up after a few weeks if they don't see results. The farmer must stick with it for at least six months before results will be really evident.

The group toured the new dairy barn of Andrew Stoltzfus of Elverson RD2. He was the outstanding Young Farmer of Pennsylvania in 1969.

Penn Dairies Tour

At the last meeting, the farmers toured the laboratory at Penn Dairies in Lancaster where Dr. Charles Levac of the Quality Control Laboratory showed the great array of tests of quality that the dairy runs on its milk.

High bacteria counts in the laboratory can be traced directly back to poor management practices on the farm, it was reported. If this occurs, the dairy makes every effort to work with the farmer on correcting any practices that would detract form milk quality.

It was shown, for example, how antibiotics administered to

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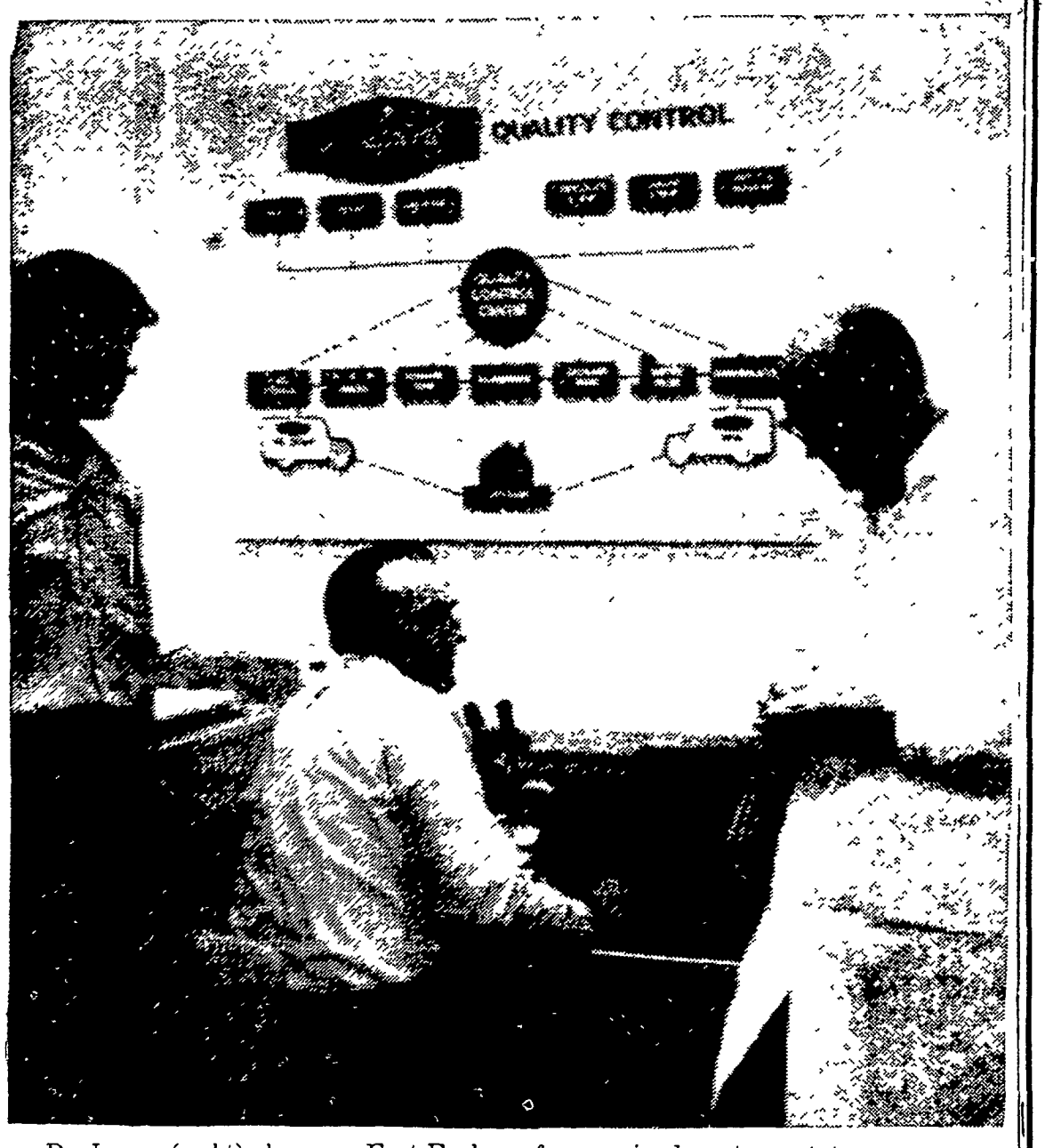

Dr. Levac (right) shows an East Earl RD1 father and son by microscope the bacteria that grow in milk. The pasteurization process kills all the harmful bacteria The demonstration pointed out that milk from the farm can contain bacteria which stem from an inadequate sanitation program on the farm. The father (seated) is Clyde Martin and son Nelson, who was recently elected the Lancaster County FFA president.