

Helping Dairymen Manage

One Morning With a DHIA Tester

"Sure, the dairyman could perform all these tests himself. Once a month he could weigh the milk from each cow at 12-hour intervals, he could take samples from each cow and send the samples to Penn State for analysis. And if he were careful and consistent, I don't doubt that his information would be as good as anything he'd get from his DHIA tester. The question is, would your average farmer, busy as he is, take the time to do it? I don't think so."

Speaking was Wilbur Houser, head DHIA supervisor for Lancaster County. He was answering the question, "Why do we have DHIA supervisors, and what exactly do they do?"

The tester is a provider of a service. His information is a tool

which dairymen use for determining feed schedules, profits, management strengths and weaknesses, buying and selling prices for cows.

Lancaster County, 437 herds have their milk tested monthly by DHIA supervisor. Nearly 360 herds are on an owner-sampler program where the dairyman does take his own samples. Owner-sampler records, however, not considered valid for sire proofs.

There are 14 testers in Lancaster County, and many Lancaster Farming readers are already familiar with their work. But for those who aren't, these photos show what happens when Houser visits one of the farms on his circuit.



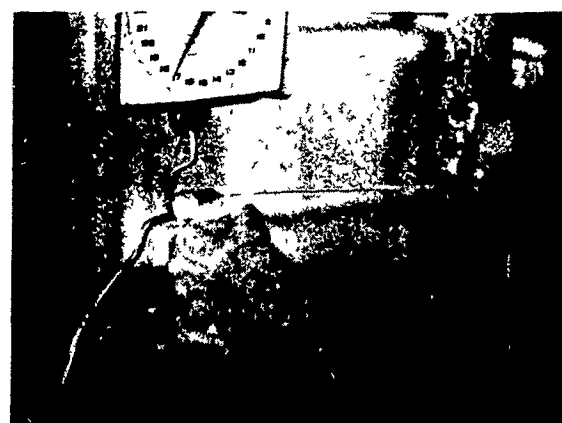
Wilbur Houser, head DHIA Supervisor for Lancaster County, was working Memorial Day, like most of the farming community. Early Monday morning he was at the J. Robert Hess farm, Strasburg, to test the 36 cow-Holstein herd there.



Right here is the focus of, and the reason for, all DHIA records.



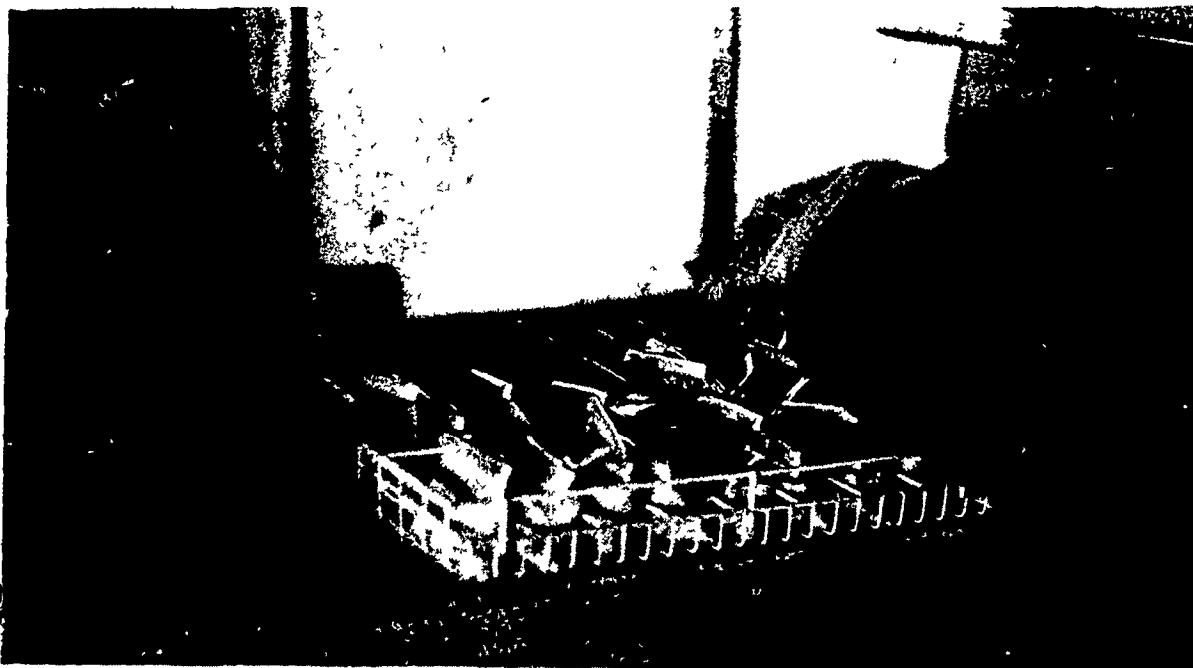
Houser carefully records the weight of the milk produced by each cow. This figure, plus the butterfat content, tells the dairyman how much of his feed dollar is being converted to milk, and how profitable each cow is.



After the milk is weighed, a sample from each cow is prepared for analysis.



The dairy production from each cow is weighed.



This rack of samples will be sent to Penn State for thorough analysis. DHIA dairymen receive a monthly report from the college which tells them exactly how well their herds are producing.