

Calf Deaths Cost Pa. Dairymen \$6 Million

UNIVERSITY PARK— Pennsylvania dairymen are losing approximately \$6 million each year from calf deaths, it was reported by an Extension dairy specialist at a Dairy Herd Management Conference at The Pennsylvania State University. Donald L. Ace, who assisted in conducting a statewide calf loss survey of 545 herds, pointed out that about one out of every six calves die before birth, during

birth, or the first six months of life.

"The most critical period in a calf's life is the first week," the Penn State specialist said. "About 50 percent of the calves that die, do so during the first seven days. Another 30 percent die during the first month."

These calves, for the most part, are potential herd replacements and dairymen can't afford to lose this valuable product if they are

to make a profit in business, Ace emphasized.

Another dairy authority, Dr. Russell Willoughby, professor of veterinary medicine at Ontario Veterinary College, noted that calf losses can be kept at a minimum if dairymen can reduce the chill factor in the barn, disinfect calving areas, and feed colostrum at birth.

"There is no one cause of calfhood diseases that results in

death," Dr. Willoughby said. "Disease-producing organisms are always present in the calf, and by following correct management procedures, these organisms will not multiply and cause the disease to develop."

The veterinarian pointed out that the two major diseases which cause high death rates are diarrhea and pneumonia.

The conference speaker said practical solutions to most calf

losses involve reducing moisture in the calf pen; colostrum feeding at birth and whole milk or high quality milk replacer during the early weeks; and proper sanitation.

Harvey E. Shaffer, Penn State Extension dairy specialist, pointed out that Holstein heifers that freshen at 24 months of age and at 1,100 pounds will return the highest profit during the lifetime in the herd.

Shaffer, who conducted a 7-year study of 2,000 DHIA Holstein cows, said that cows that freshen later than 24 months generally are lower lifetime producers.

He also pointed out that cows which are heavy or carry excessive fleshing tend to freshen fewer times while in the herd.

Approximately 400 dairymen attended the two-day conference sponsored by the Penn State Cooperative Extension Service.

Chester Co. Holstein Tour Deadline Set for March 17

The Chester County Holstein Breeders' annual tour is planned this year on March 22 and 23. A two day tour is planned to visit some of Maryland and Virginia's top dairy herds. Some of the herds to be visited include C. E. Iager and Sons, Maple Lawn Farm, Kingstead Farm; Renn Remsburg's Brooklodge Farms, and Round Oak Farm.

Interested dairymen are invited to join this tour. For further details and bus reservations please contact Donald M. Hostetter at (215) 857-9648, or Robert Pepple at (215) 932-3975, by March 17.

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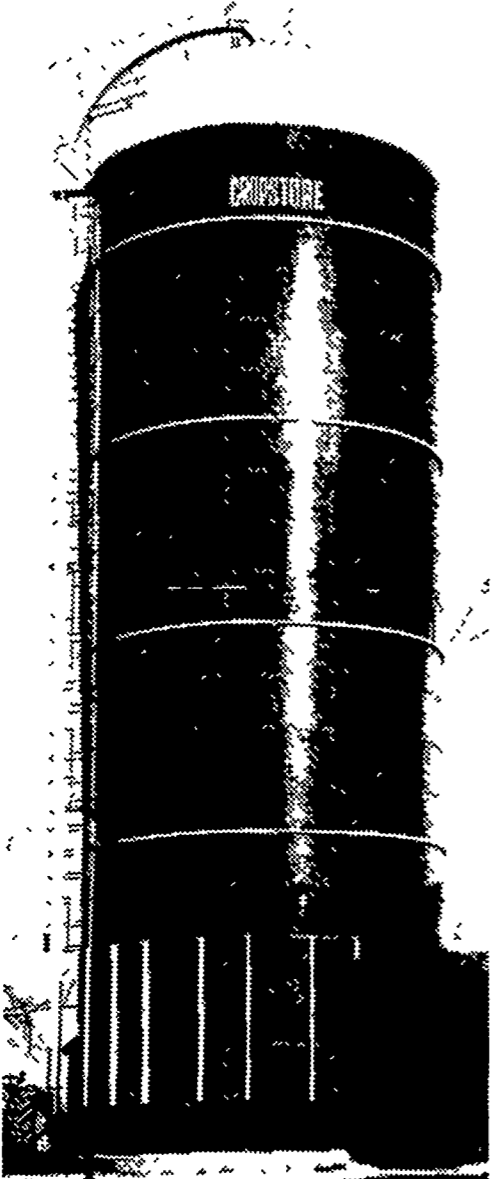
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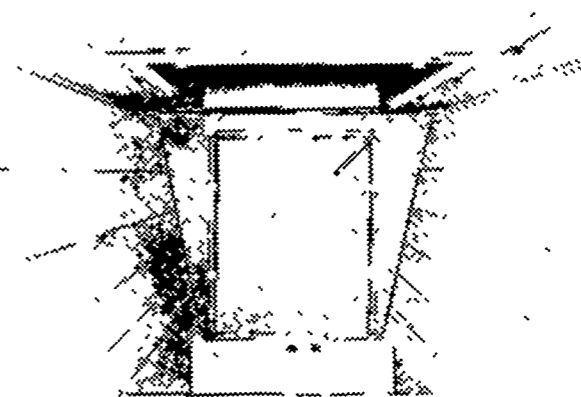
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