

# Keep Cows Milking This Summer

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Most people respond favorably to comfort and regular attention; dairy cattle are much the same. In other words, keep cows comfortable this summer if you expect them to produce well. Cow comfort can be summed up in several words: fly control, regular attention, shade, ventilation, fresh water, and sufficient feed.

### Control Flies

Flies not only annoy cattle, but they also suck blood and carry diseases. They can reduce milk production by as much as 20 percent. If you want good fly control, start NOW—before the flies become a problem—and perform ALL five of the following practices:

1. Sanitation—This is the most important practice in the control of flies; it prevents fly buildup by eliminating breeding areas. Spraying is no substitution for sanitation! Sanitation involves the daily cleaning of stable gutters and daily scraping of alleys and lots. It also means weekly removal of any bedded manure packs.

2. Shade—Cows like shade, but most flies do not. Thus, one way

to keep cows comfortable and also protect them from flies is to either keep them in a clean, well-ventilated barn during the daytime or provide plenty of shade in the pasture.

3. Cattle Sprays—At best, sprays will only give very temporary relief, and daily spraying is usually necessary. This may be accomplished in a number of ways. Best coverage can be obtained by either using mist sprayers located in the barn exit or by using small hand sprayers at milking time. Another alternative is to use dust bags or self-oilers in the cow exits. Recommended materials include: Ciodrin, Vapona, malathion, and methoxychlor.

4. Stable Insecticide—As I mentioned earlier, the use of insecticides is no substitution for good sanitation. However, they can supplement sanitation, and can be used in one of several ways. Of the insecticides, fly baits probably will give the best control. Baits should be kept away from feed and milk. Another alternative is to fog the stable with insecticide such as pyrethrins or Vapona; these materials will quickly kill only those flies that are present in the barn at that time, and will give no

residual control. For residual control, the walls, ceilings, and stalls may be sprayed with Cygon, Baytex, Korlan, or Gardona. At best, residual control usually lasts for only a few weeks; results are usually unpredictable and repeated applications are necessary.

5. Milk House Insecticides—The first objective should be to keep flies out of the milk house by using screens and keeping the milk house doors closed. When it is necessary to revert to sprays, be sure to keep milk utensils and milk protected. Pyrethrins can be used as a safe spray to kill those flies that are present at the time of spraying. Korlan or malathion applied to the walls will give some residual control for a few weeks.

When using insecticides, be sure to read the labels carefully and follow all instructions.

### Regular Attention

Cows are creatures of habit. They adjust slowly to changes in work routine and feed schedules. Thus, it would be wise to establish regular work routines. Remember, on the dairy farm the milk end of the business is the profit end. Do not neglect the cows for the field work; the field work may be more appealing, but the barn work and the time spent observing cows may be more profitable. Some dairymen estimate that when they miss one heat period on a good cow it costs them up to \$100.

Avoid frequent and drastic changes in the feeding program. This can be a problem when green chopping a variety of

different crops at various stages of maturity, or when switching from corn silage to either grass silage or haylage.

### Shade plus Ventilation

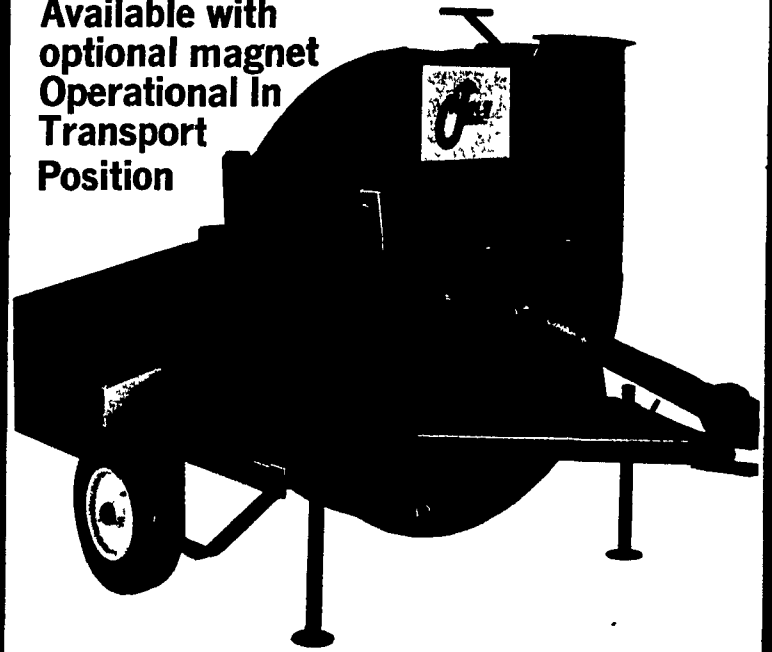
Cattle appreciate shade, but shade is not much good without air movement. Therefore, provide both. Heat depresses

appetite and lowers breeding efficiency. Milk production starts dropping as temperatures rise to approximately 65 or 70 degrees F. To avoid the production slump, keep cattle indoors during the day time, in a clean well-ventilated barn, it could be the

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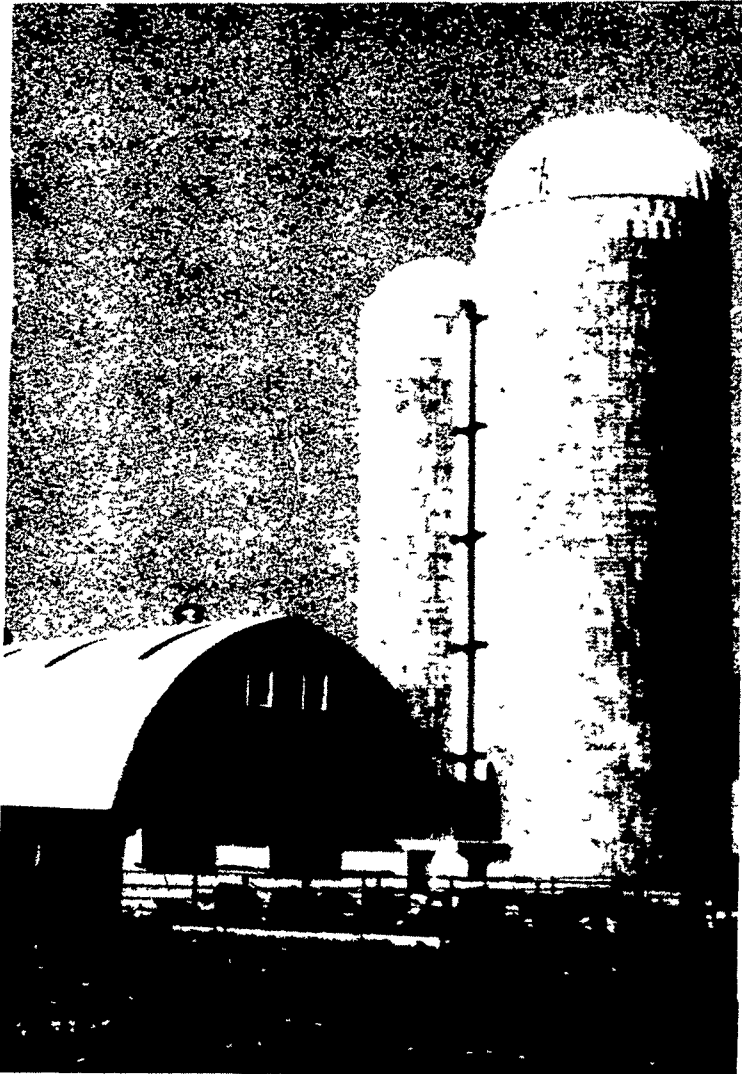
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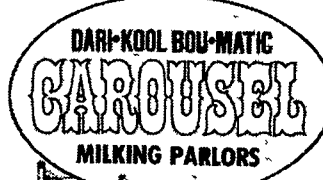
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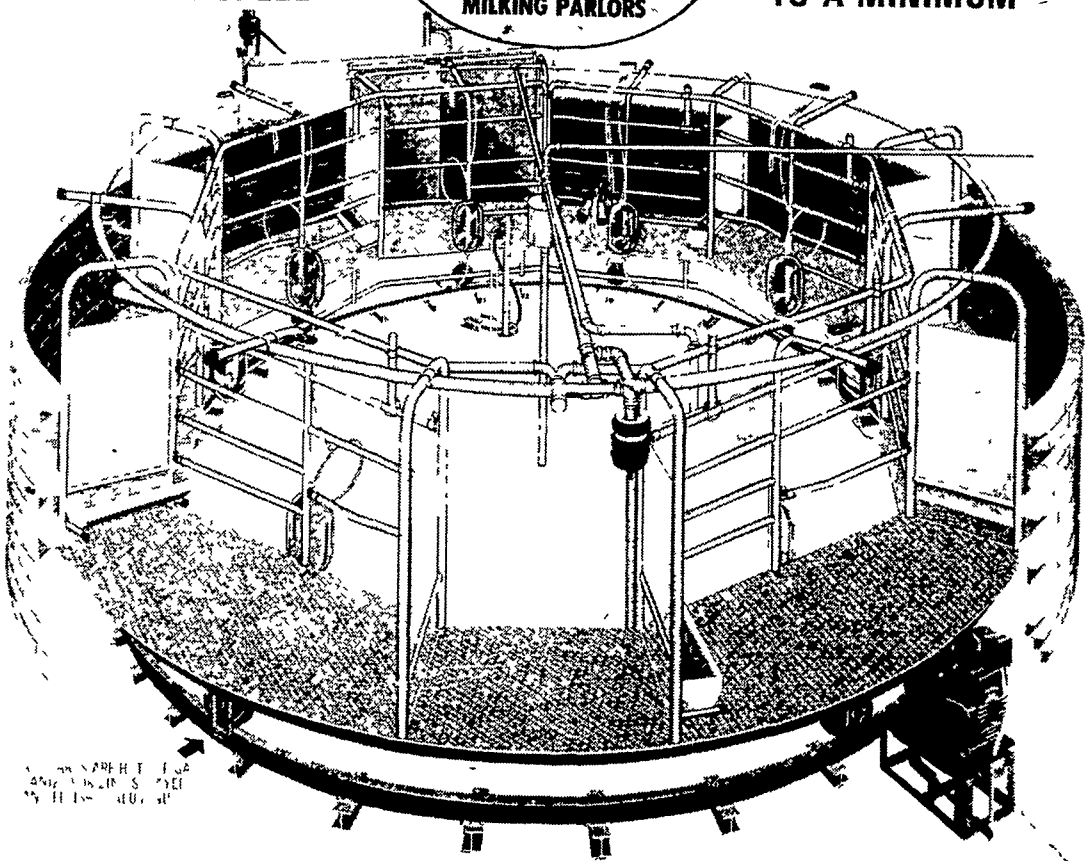
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