

Victor Ziegler (Continued From Page 1)

management practices that he can find.

All of Ziegler's feeds are stored outside. Corn silage and haylage are kept in bunker silos, one of which measures 200x30x14 feet, and holds 3000 tons. Two 24x70 bottom-unloading silos are not in use. A possibility for using them in the future may be high moisture corn, says Victor. Concentrates are also piled up outside. What about spoilage? "I feed it too fast to give it a chance to spoil, and it eventually gets wet anyway once it enters the cow's stomach", says Victor. Brewers grains, also stored in the open, are delivered to the farm for \$13 per ton.

A long, automated feed bunk is not in use because Ziegler has found an easier, faster way which is far less complicated or prone to break down. "Bunker silos," says Victor, "are especially desirable for large volume feeding", and therefore the type of feeding systems found on other farms, are not practical for him. The mechanized feeding equipment at the Ziegler dairy consists of a front-end loader, and a tractor hitched to a 5-ton, self-unloading mix wagon. Victor smilingly commented that his one "service call" cost him five dollars, for the use of his neighbor's tractor.

The huge mixing wagon is loaded up with roughages and concentrates in a matter of minutes and then unloaded along a concreted feeding area which borders a sturdy steel fence. Victor has found fence-line feeding to be very efficient, convenient, and fast. It takes three 5-ton loads to feed the milking herd, which is divided into five groups. One group, referred to as "specials" are cows due to freshen within 2 weeks and those which have been fresh for 3-4 days.

Ziegler's feeding program allows an average of 30-35 pounds of brewers grains per cow. The protein content of added concentrates varies from 16-20 percent, depending on the availability of haylage. Protein requirements are not as high when haylage is a part of the mixed feed. Additional protein needs are provided by a commercial LPS feeder.

Unlike most dairymen with milking parlors, Victor does not feed anything in his milking facility. The original herringbone section, built in 1956, was equipped with feeders, but frequent problems caused Ziegler to discontinue their use. When the parlor was enlarged to a double-12 in 1969, automatic feeders were scratched from the blueprints.

Three to four people complete one milking in about 2½ hours. Mrs. Ziegler, and the girls work in the parlor just as frequently as the men. In order to keep high producing cows on as close to a 12-12 hour schedule as possible, low milkers are milked first in the afternoon and last in the morning. This allows for a one-hour difference between morning and evening milking hours. Production levels sometimes reach 10,000 pounds per day for the 210 milking cows.

There are 470 free-stalls at the Ziegler dairy. By using the front-end loader and feed-mix wagon, one man can bed all of them in about two hours. Victor discovered that three scoops of sawdust mixed with one scoop of topsoil makes an ideal bedding material because it stays in the stalls better. Topsoil is easily available because of several building projects in progress on the farm.

Animal wastes are handled primarily through liquid manure pits and a lagoon. One of the pits is open, allowing odors to escape gradually. If necessary, the pits can be entered with a tractor and loader to clean out any residues which the 1000 gallon-a-minute pump may leave behind. All concreted areas are sloped to aid drainage of manure towards the pits or lagoon. Should an energy shortage arise at the farm, Victor is already making plans for tapping gases

from the manure pits.

Ziegler estimates that ninety percent of his herd is bred naturally. "There are so many good bulls for sale," he says "that it pays me to save the time and costs involved with artificial breeding. Watching this herd can tie up a good man for several hours a day," he claims "I save a lot of dollars this way." Breeding problems, so often a thorn in the dairyman's life, are not as serious for Victor today as what they could be or have been. In 1959 he lost three-quarters of his herd to brucellosis and his entire business had to be refinanced.

Calves are raised in individual pens with slatted floors. They receive "pickled" colostrum for two months, and grain and water is supplied at all times after they are about 10 days old. Milk replacer is fed only if the sour colostrum is not available.

Every year, about mid-November, after the crops are in and the first frost has struck, Victor puts an electric fence around his entire property and lets the older heifers and dry cows roam freely. They clean up the corn and save Ziegler about two tons of silage per day. Also, he saves bedding material, and labor involved in feeding and manure handling.

This past summer Victor decided that a cow with a dock tail would look better, (expose her rear udder), be cleaner, and be more pleasant to work with. Out of over 200 cows to have their tails docked about one-half way up, only two bled significantly. Victor and his hired help are very pleased with the results. To those who may find fault with this controversial practice, Ziegler asks: "What about steers who were castrated, and bull dogs which have their ears clipped?" The cows showed no ill effects of the amputation, he says.

Victor raises approximately one-half to two-thirds of his roughage requirements. The main crop is no-till corn. Ziegler believes in disking his land one time before planting and cites the following advantages: better conservation, accepts rain more readily, trash does not float and accumulate in low areas of fields, less chemicals are needed for weed control, no army worm, - over-all easier management.

The only other crop raised on Ziegler's farm is alfalfa mixed with orchard grass. "I sold my baler nine years ago," he said proudly, claiming that two men can handle the same amount of haylage as four men can handle in bales. Although Ziegler's farmland is only slightly rolling he has all of it contoured and is even considering terracing as an additional conservation measure.

There is no pasture on this farm. What little land is unsuitable for farming is presently being considered for building lots. Ziegler's other "construction sites" include a combination water-reservoir, swimming pool, and fire protection facility, and an acre pond for recreation and fire protection.

The entire Ziegler family is involved with farm chores. Two hired men round out the labor force. Incentives are offered in several ways. Victor and his hired men take turns watching the cows in the maternity pens. An employee receives two dollars for every fresh cow which stays in the herd for a reasonable length of time, and one dollar for every healthy new-born calf. In addition, Ziegler pays two cents per hundred pounds of milk produced.

Among Victor's off-the-farm responsibilities and interests are positions with various county organizations. This fall he was elected for a term on the Eastern Lebanon County school board. He is also active in the Lebanon County Soil and Water Conservation Committee and the Lebanon County Farmers Association of which he has served as both treasurer and

president. The Lebanon County Agway Committee and the Lehigh Advisory Committee help to keep Victor busy too. In addition, he is serving on the board of directors for the local chapter of Teen Challenge, and he is a youth director for his church.

Victor and Grace Ziegler have five children. Bonnie 19, is employed as a nurse's aid at the Evangelical Church home. Sharon, 18, is a secretary at a local hydraulic foundry. Both still make it out to the barn occasionally, says Victor proudly. Sixteen year old Teresa is a junior at E.L. Co. high school. Lynn, 15, is a sophomore at the same school and is currently more interested in soccer than anything else, says his Dad. Thirteen-year-old Leon's favorite sport is football. "They all help", says Victor.

The family, members of the Heidelberg Church of the Brethren, recently sponsored a family from Uganda, East Africa. "You can't help anybody else without helping yourself at the same time," says Victor. He paid transportation and other costs to bring the Ahmed Pabani family to this country. They live in a home owned by the Zieglers. Victor has also hired young men who have been in trouble and has made all the comforts of his home available to them.

Economic pressures of the past year have caused many farmers to quit, but Victor is optimistic about the future. "It has to get better," he says, "because world markets are opening up. Foreign economies can now afford our agricultural and non-agricultural products." Furthermore, Ziegler forecasts an end to Americans' past habits of "buying luxuries first, and necessities second."

"Twenty or thirty years ago anyone could farm," says Ziegler. "That's not true anymore. You need to be industrious and have lots of initiative." Reflecting on past efforts, achievements, and lessons, Victor advises: "The time to do something is when someone wants to help you. Seventy-five percent of success is positive thinking. Plan ahead. To get ahead, you must go into debt. Stick your neck out for an opportunity."

Ziegler credits his success to God-given blessings, of which he considers his good health and a loving wife to be the most valuable.

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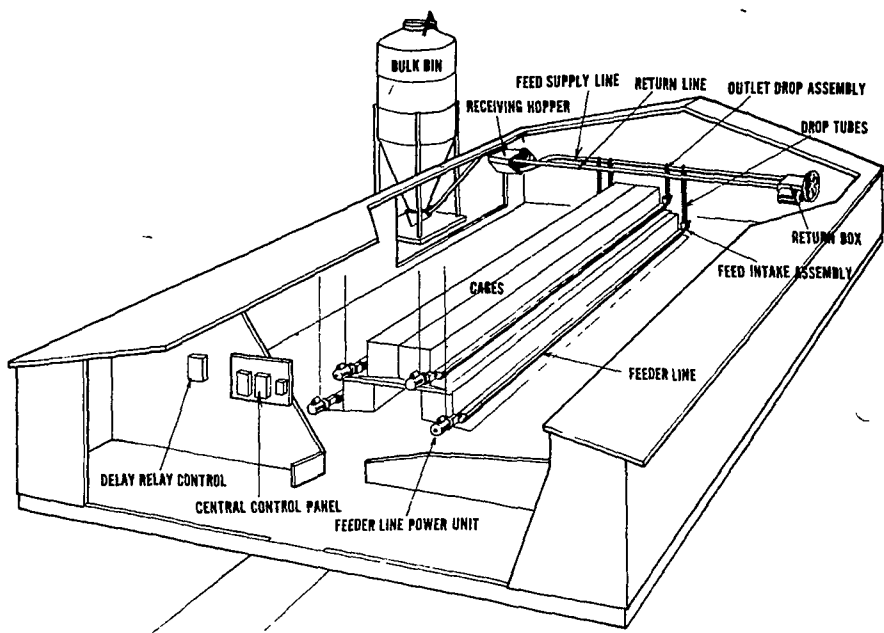
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Holstein Assoc.

Sees Need For Calf Vaccination

Directors of the Pennsylvania Holstein Association in session at State College, Pa. have gone on record to stress the importance of continuing calfhood vaccination. The State Holstein Directors think now is the time for a complete re-evaluation of the brucellosis eradication program with continuing emphasis on calfhood vaccination at an early age as the best means known for complete control of the disease. Funds spent for the prevention of brucellosis in our national herds are but a fraction of the astronomical losses which would occur should there be a serious outbreak, stated Association President, Neil Bowen, Wellsboro, Pa.

Home Furnishings Patterns Available

Major pattern companies which used to concentrate on clothes are now offering home furnishings patterns. Extension specialists at The Pennsylvania State University say you can now find patterns for draperies, curtains, bedspreads, tablecloths, furniture covers, pillows and placemats. Also available are patterns for kitchen accessories and closet items.