



Feeding time at "Arkavalley Farm" is a matter of driving down the feed alleys or along fence lines with self-unloading forage boxes which mix a complete ration. Feed bunks and

fence-line feed strips are featured at the research facility which is located on 802 acres of comparatively unproductive land in central Arkansas.



Once they've been loaded with sorghum silage and brewers grains, trucks move to the grain bins where the proper ration is added and

automatically incorporated into the feed. Electronic scales on the box let the operator know when filling is complete.

## Dairy research

[Continued from Page 77] practicality of the operation is being kept in mind.

Sorghum silage, which was described as "poor forage" by two of the managers, is stored in three

bunker silos, the largest of which is 60 feet wide, 300 feet long, and has a capacity of 10 to 12-thousand tons. Most of the crop is grown outside of the farm's own tillable 400 acres. Contract growers,

managers found out, could provide the necessary feed so that attention at "Arkavalley" could be focused on dairy management entirely, rather than inclusive with field work. Those contract growers manage a total of approximately 1900 acres of sorghum fields — or roughly one acre per cow.

Sorghum silage is the bulk of the ration, and is, in fact, the only forage being offered at the present time. The top producing cows receive a ration containing about 81.7 per cent sorghum silage, 11.1 per cent brewers grains, and 7.2 per cent of Purina's Golden Milk Chow Special (18 per cent protein). During early years the herd was fed different amounts, and low fat tests were often encountered during the summer. A change in rations, and the addition of "buffer" compounds has allowed "Arkavalley" to maintain fat tests of 3.5 per cent or better even when heat and humidity reach summertime highs.

Loaded into self-unloading mix wagons equipped with scales, all but small amounts of a dairy feed are fed by way of these vehicles. They unload into either fence-line or conventional bunk feeders. One man feeds all of the milking cows — starting at 6 a.m. and finishing at 3 p.m. Top milking strings are fed six times per day, others four times. A small amount of a pelleted feed is used in the parlor to give cows an extra incentive to come in. Molasses blocks had been tried prior to that with little success, the management reported.

In order to give its employees incentive, "Arkavalley Farm" has five bonus schedules based on production, extra cows milked, mastitis reductions,

longevity of cows, and length of service of the employee. The average salary with bonuses is somewhere between \$850 and \$900 per month, a farm manager said. Time off is rotational with the average work week adding up to 5 1/2 days even though no one ever really works a half day.

The heifer replacement program is a key part in the research farm's goal for developing its own source of good milk cows. The average

"milking" life of a dairy cow here is only three years, so the program calls for improvement starting right at the time calves are born. A calf mortality rate of 10 per cent in a herd of this size is considered to be "workable" according to specialists at the farm. That rate has been achieved.

The calf barn is normally filled with around 300 calves. The feeding of colostrum,

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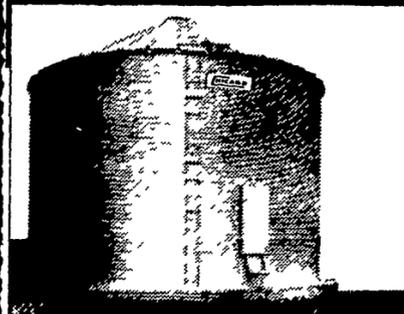
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