



Snow fences piled up like this strengthen the motorist's opinion that road crews aren't doing all they could to lessen Winter driving problems.

## Truckers asking for relief

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time and they would appreciate the help.

Farmers generally receive lots of praise from the haulers of their commodities. Most producers realize that they have a stake in getting their products to market. But a few, say the truckers, feel their responsibility ends once they have their product in storage on the farm.

Problems due to bad road conditions are compounded significantly when a

dairyman is on every day pick-up, say the haulers. Their claim is that farmers have often expanded their milk production without adjusting their storage capacities. Consequently, some dairymen run out of space in the tank after just two milkings. It doesn't give the haulers much of a chance to get in when a storm hits, as occurred this week. A sizable number of Pennsylvania dairymen have had to dump milk this week. Some may not have had to do

so if their tanks were of proper size, the truckers claim.

Haulers are also concerned about the quality of the milk in the tank since they carry considerable responsibility in making that judgement. They ask for the dairyman's cooperation on that score, adding that milk more than 66 hours old isn't to be picked up, according to law. The farmer, hauler, cop, and dairy can get in trouble for violating quality standards.

Road conditions, stranded motorists and truckers create another major problem for the haulers of perishable goods such as milk and eggs. The consensus among the milk haulers is that Pennsylvania's Department of Transportation isn't, doing all it can to keep the roads cleared and some of the folks who block highways had no business being out there in the first place.

Some milk haulers are particularly upset about the operations of larger trucking firms, claiming that many of their rigs are on the road with smooth tires.

This week's snow storm caused three of Leon Stoltzfus' tractors to be stranded for the first time in the 23 years he's been in the business. Stoltzfus owns a Lancaster County trucking firm which goes under the name of L&N Enterprises.

The snowbound rigs were located in Chester County along Route 30, a major artery, which runs from coast to coast. Stoltzfus claims the road could have been plowed better. One of his three trucks was stranded for nearly 12 hours. The driver stayed in the cab without food or drink. PennDOT isn't cooperating as well as they used to, says Stoltzfus and more tax money goes hand in hand with less service.

The problems for truckers don't end there, claims Stoltzfus, who has six tractor and trailers on the road. On one day of this week he was hit with \$1500 worth of operating expenses over and above normal operating costs. The cause of the extra bills were frozen brakes which ruined a set of tires valued at \$300, six sets of tire chains valued at \$80 per set, and a collision with a snowplow. Additional damages may not be found until weeks from now.

Service is another problem the haulers have to contend with. Parts aren't as easily acquired because suppliers don't stay open evenings and weekends like they used to, says Stoltzfus. Repair shops have cut their service hours too, he claims. Resulting problems are especially acute, he claims, if union shop rules are involved. The alternative has been for truckers to carry their own expanded parts inventories and service areas. It's been a big factor in rising costs. The bottom line is that they're feeling a pinch in the pocketbook and it won't get any better. As an example there's talk in Harrisburg of raising licensing fees for trailer tractors from around \$600 per year to \$1200. Pennsylvania will also begin weighing trucks within the near future and it's no secret that some fellows will have to lighten their loads to avoid stiff fines. Lighter loads will mean a decrease in efficiency, perhaps more trips, and thus added expenses.

There is some talk too, among milk haulers, that service could be better at the dairy and communications

could be improved between the hauling firms and the producer cooperative. Haulers generally receive their delivery instructions from the dispatcher at the cooperative. Occasionally it happens that the truck will be given a different destination once it arrives at the original point of delivery. The rerouting is at the trucker's own expense, says Stoltzfus.

Lloyd Welk, owner of a milk hauling business in southern Lancaster County, told Lancaster Farming that he can't really complain about his scheduling. Arrangements are almost always made to his satisfaction. Receivers at

the plant are usually on duty too, he says. Stoltzfus hasn't always had that kind of luck, he claims.

Welk says that the cooperative he has a contract with makes the arrangements for delivery and unloading. A phone call giving details of arrival time is generally all that's necessary to have receiving personnel at the dairy. Welk hauls much of his milk to Penn Dairies in Lancaster and says that during bad weather, a receiver was on duty all night. Stoltzfus has had to wait until the following morning at his destination — the A&P

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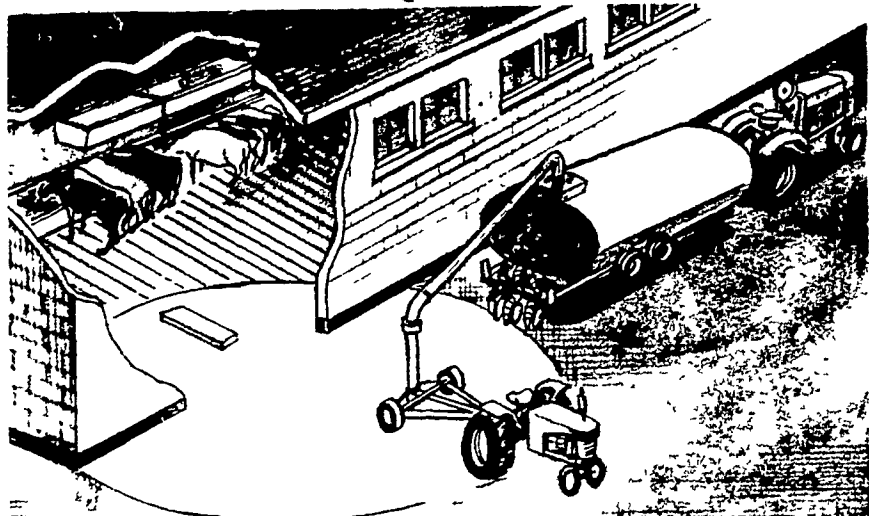
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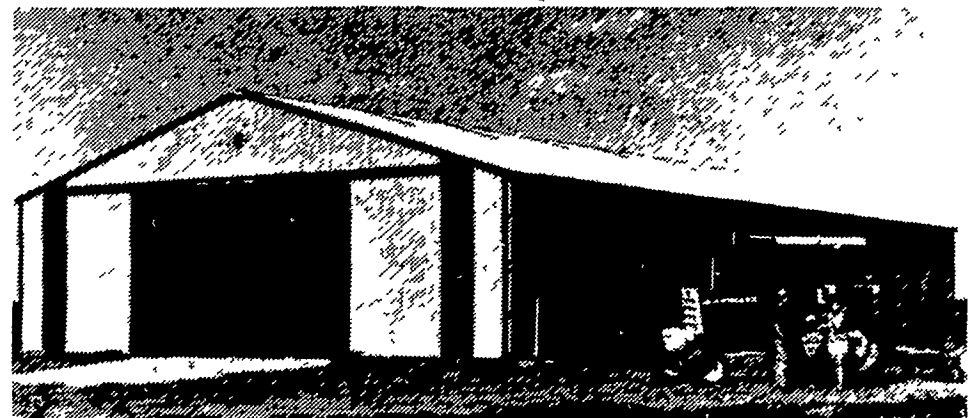
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