

More light hours may boost milk production

GETTYSBURG — It's possible to have 7-10 percent more milk without increased feed costs according to Adams County Agent Thomas Piper.

With \$30 to \$40 investment you can expose cows to 16 hours of continuous light.

The recommendation of 16 hours of continuous light per day is the result of research done by Allen Tucker at Michigan State University. Although research is continuing in this breakthrough, the following facts have been shown in the effects of light on cattle:

- ✓ Cows exposed to 16 hours of light produce 7-10 percent more milk than cows on 9-12 hours of light per day.

- ✓ During early lactation, the cows produce this additional milk without increasing their feed consumption.

- ✓ During late lactation, long day cows ate more than others.

- ✓ Holstein heifers exposed to 16 hour days resulted in a 10-15 percent increase in body weight gain.

- ✓ These heifers also came into puberty at an earlier age.

- ✓ Mercury vapor lights give about the same results as fluorescent lights (The lighting used in most of the studies.)

- ✓ Low intensity lights work as well as high intensity lights, lighting at reading level is sufficient.

- ✓ No undesirable side effects of 16 hour lighting have been observed, except the loss of cow's long winter hair.

- ✓ 24 hours of light does not result in increased milk production. Give the cows 8 hours of dark.

Here's what you can do:

Add an inexpensive time clock (\$30-\$40) to a string of lights in your barn. Set it for 16 hours light and 8 hours dark.

The production increase will not occur overnight.

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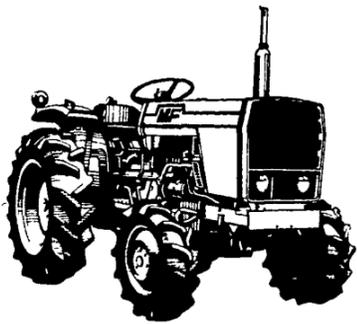
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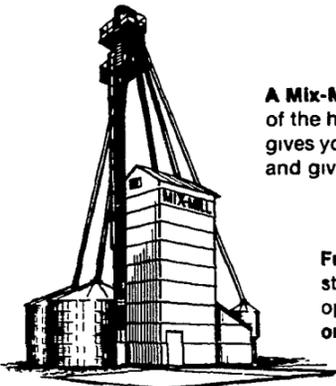
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