

No easy start

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cent pellet during milking, along with silage, haylage, and free choice minerals and salt according to their production. And, a 1½-inch vacuum line was replaced with a 3-inch line — lessening the vacuum 'rushing' therefore relaxing the cows, according to Carl.

Now that their mastitis problems

have been brought under control, the Brosses are ready to push forward. They've set a goal of 15,000 pounds milk to aim for next year, and as each goal is met a higher one will be set.

The Brosses admit they farm conservatively, buying mostly used equipment and raising their own replacement heifers.

"It costs more money to raise your own replacements," claims Eva. "But when we used to buy our replacements, we got everybody else's seconds — cows no one else

wanted. We still have a grade herd, but if our son Dennis decides he wants to farm, I'd like to go with a registered herd. That's my 'fall of life' goal," she says.

With an eye on the next generation continuing in his footsteps, Carl has added another 62-acre farm to the operation, remodeled his old Dutch-style barn, erected two freestall facilities, and installed a 180-day-storage manure pit.

In order to make the most of what he has, Carl explains how soil conservation has played an important part in his farm operation.

Each fall, he says, rye is sown as a cover crop in the corn fields cut for silage, helping to prevent soil erosion and providing a green manure in the spring. The rye also gives a two-week boost in feed the following spring, he notes.

Carl also has traded the mold-board plow for disking and some no-till farming which helps conserve the moisture in his naturally

droughty soil, he says.

"You get attached to the soil," Eva says lovingly, adding she hopes to never see their farms sold for other purposes. But she has faith that her grown-up sons will continue in their father's footsteps and find their career in agriculture. Realizing the problems they had to face might also confront their sons, she states, "When you're younger, you can risk more. You have more energy then."

Although the farming methods may change with the next generation, the Bross's love of the land and the willingness to sweat and toil to keep it will carry on, along with their inherent faith that things can work out.

"You can have all the knowledge and skills, but if it doesn't rain, they don't do you any good. It all goes back to that basic dependence on our creator. No man can do it alone," Carl says with a smile.

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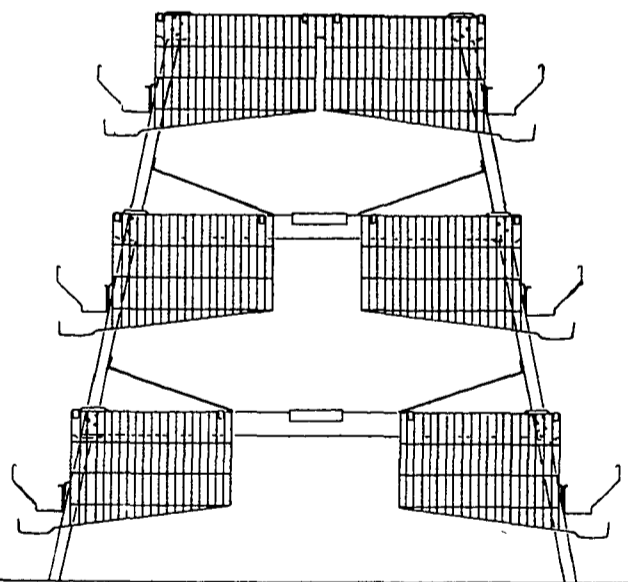
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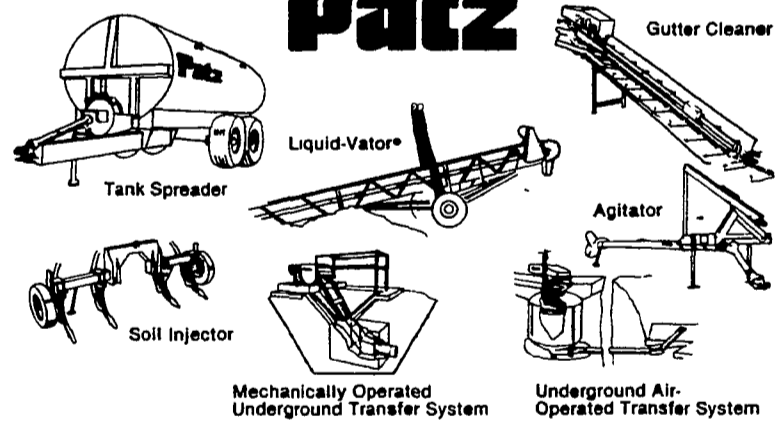
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