

# Top dairy vet explains fat cow syndrome

BY DONNA TOMMELLEO  
 FREDERICK, Md. — Nationally known, dairy veterinarian, Dr. L.C. Allenstein, Whitewater, Wisconsin, discussed health and reproductive problems, Thursday, in front of a fullhouse crowd during the 21st annual meeting of the Maryland Artificial Breeding Cooperative.

Alenstein recently served as veterinarian for the World Dairy Expo in Madison, Wis., and is a regular contributor to the "Cowside Practice" column of Hoard's Dairyman.

Alenstein explained that the fat cow syndrome, characterized by off-feed and sluggishness, is related to overconditioning in the

last two to three months of lactation.

"This fat cow is sometimes the basis of all our trouble we see later."

"I think that liver, which is the trouble spot in the fat cow, actually gets fat infiltrated in that period."

He continued, "I think you got to think about this way back then — not when the cow is dry."

Alenstein attributed the downer cow syndrome as stemming from the overconditioning of the late lactation cow.

"The biggest thing we see is the depression of the immune system," reported Alenstein.

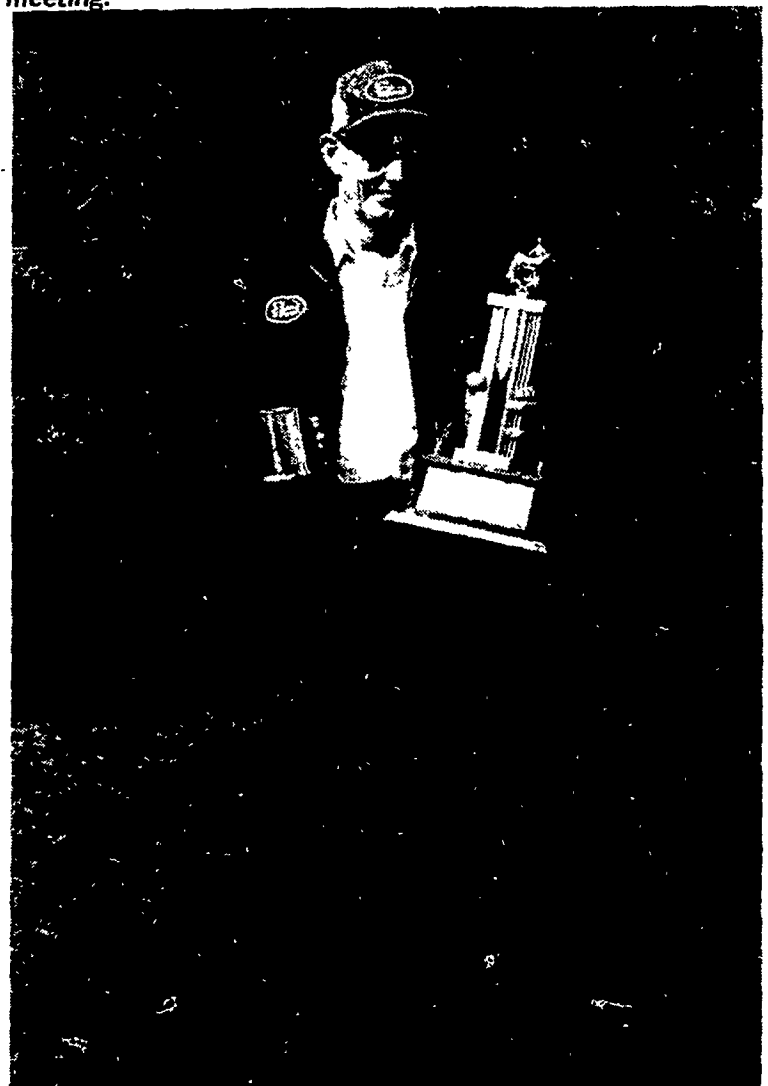
The depression, he explained, would make the cow very



Doty Remsburg, sale manager of the 1981 record-breaking National Holstein Sale, is joined by his family following his induction into the Maryland Dairy Shrine, Thursday. From left to right the group includes, Remsburg, grandson Darren, 3½, son Denny, daughter-in-law Marsha with Brenna, 2, daughter Lois and wife Helen.



Wisconsin veterinarian, Dr. L.C. Allenstein points to the hazards of overconditioning the dry period. Alenstein addressed the membership of the Maryland Artificial Breeding Cooperative Thursday during the co-op's 21st annual meeting.



John Summers proudly displays his trophy and mug for his outstanding achievements as the co-op's technician of the year. Summers and wife Winifred reside in Middletown, Md.

susceptible to any kind of infection. "I think this is the greatest thing the fat cow does, and very few people recognize this," he added.

Alenstein urged farmers to provide the proper nutritional requirements in the ration as part of a prevention program.

He suggested decreasing corn silage and grain in late lactation cows and maintaining weight on dry cows.

Coarse fiber should play a major part in the dry cow ration. If long stem hay is not available, Alenstein offered several substitutes such as beet pulp, brewers grain and corn stalks.

During the dry period, a mastitis program should be considered said Alenstein.

In his Wisconsin practice, Alenstein has a monthly herd surveillance program which tests each cow's milk sample for somatic cells. Upon finding a high SCC, Alenstein administers a four-step treatment.

"I culture a representative sample of the high cell counts. I determine what bacteria is present, I do run sensitivity on them and I recommend accordingly what antibiotic to use in the herd.

At the onset of the dry period, Alenstein repeats the process and re-checks problem cows a few days after treatment.

On the subject of milk fever, Alenstein called for close monitoring of calcium intake.

"Anytime you get up near 80-100 grams of calcium per day in the dry cow, you're getting close to trouble."

The proper forage to concentrate ratio, Alenstein warned, is extremely important in another costly malady — displaced abomasum.

"The way we make hay today has something to do with this," he said.

Alenstein explained that alfalfa cut in the pre-bud stage contains only about 20 percent fiber.

"You have no scratch factor left in this roughage." He continued, "I'm sure this is one of the problems we see in displaced abomasums."

One of the best diagnostic tools for determining the status of the stomach, suggested Alenstein, is a fecal pH meter.

Alenstein pointed out that feet problems may stem from heavy grain rations.

"There's nothing worse to see than a first-calf heifer that can't get up and down after you bring

her in and start pouring the feed to her."

Heavy grain feeding, he explained, causes the sensitive laminae to swell and become extremely sore.

It may be several months before farmers notice the imperfections in the feet, such as the abscesses and separations in the walls in the sole.

Although Alenstein offered ideas on prevention and treatment of many health problems he concluded with:

"Believe your own vet. He knows more about your herd and situation at home."

Throughout the day, members and technicians of the Maryland A.B.C. were recognized for their past achievements.

Allie Messer, Chestertown, Md., and Doty Remsburg, Jefferson, Md., were inducted into the

Maryland Dairy Shrine where their pictures will hang with more than 30 other men who have contributed significantly to the state's dairy industry.

Messer, began dairying with Jerseys at the age of 12 in 1926. He later developed a herd of registered Holsteins and collected the Maryland All Get of Sire award from 1960-64.

For most of his life, Messer has been quite active in 4-H. A 4-H leader for 45 years, he considers 4-H as having provided the better part of his education.

In 1934, he was a delegate to the National 4-H Camp in Washington, D.C. Messer was selected to tell the 4-H story to Congress and the President. He received the National 4-H Alumni Award in 1953.

Doty Remsburg, a life-long (Turn to Page A32)



Allie Messer and wife Edith respond with smiles following Messers induction into the Maryland Dairy Shrine, Thursday afternoon. The Shrine was set up 17 years ago to honor people who have made significant contributions to Maryland's dairy industry.