

Dairyman's pledge

(Continued from Page A26)

"We use minimal bedding. Some studies at Cornell showed that cows prefer the mats. They'll spend more time lying on them instead of standing in the aisles and they give higher production."

"As far as the manure system is concerned, we had the sloping terrain so why not take advantage of it."

"When we're up to 210 cows, we should have four-months of storage and I can load out our Zook spreader in about a minute and a half."

The engineers even recommended we put it down more in front, but we were interested in aesthetics, too. So, we kept it off to the side of the loafing barn.

A drive-through mixer wagon is used for feeding in the new barn. The mineral portion of the TMR ration is formulated with F.M. Brown's and the forage goes to Penn State for analysis.

"Nutrition is so important," Curt said.

"We have a certain genetic base to work with here in our herd but to meet its potential you need the nutrition."

The herd is divided into four production groups.

At the very top is about the leading 10 percent, milking around 90 to 100 pounds. The herd includes two 2E cows. These top producers get a special added top dressing of such things as bypass proteins, dried brewers grain, soybean meal, etc.

"We go beyond what we feed the 80-pound producers and try to minimize the weight loss these top milkers are experiencing," Curt explains.

Below the 80-pound producers are those in the 50 to 55-pound category and then the under 35-pound milkers, which get only haylage, silage and corn grain.

Once a day, about six pounds of alfalfa hay is fed, too.

"Presently, our rolling herd average is around 16,000 pounds and just under 600 of fat," Curt said.

"But we're not culling now because we're trying to build up the herd size. When we were selling breeding stock, the average was up around 17,200 with 630 fat." Production per se is not the

major guideline, according to Curt. It's profit over feed cost per individual animal.

The dry cows also get special attention. They're taken out of the free-stall barn to get them out of the moisture and divided into two groups for dietary attention, depending on which part of their dry period they're in.

And thus, with this latest major expansion, the pledge of the parents is coming true.

And even the cows appear to be cooperating.

"We've been on a run of twin births," Russell Dietrich explains.

"We've had six sets just recently."

"Only one set of bulls, two with a bull and heifer each and three sets of twin heifers."

If this birthing run continues, it won't take too long to get up to that 210-cow capacity.



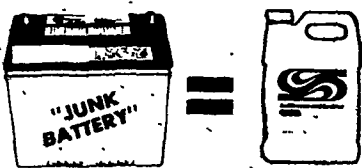
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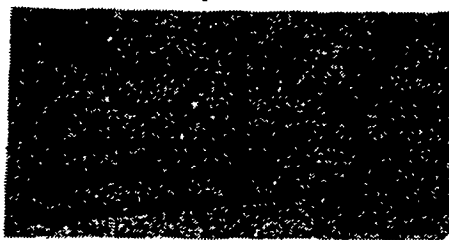
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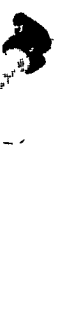
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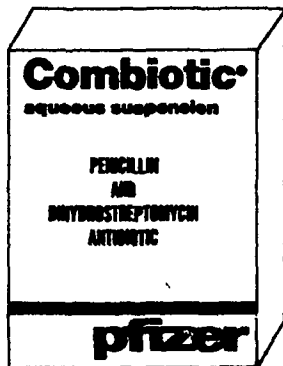
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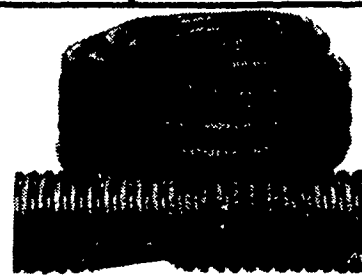
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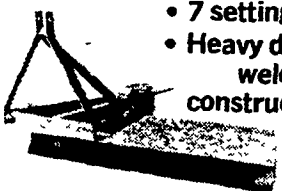
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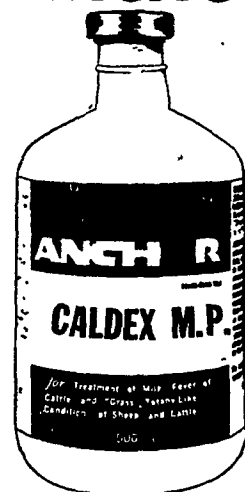
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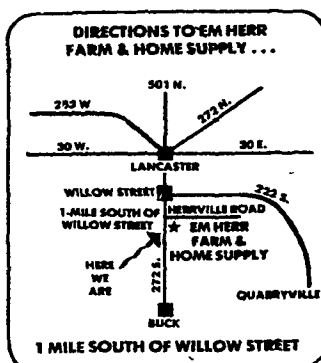
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