

State DHIA

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key punching and increased turn-around time by more than five percent. Barn sheets that took longer than a week to arrive to producers, now reach their destination in about six days.

The tight economy has caused many programs to lean away from government grants and loans, resulting in more of the private sector searching their own pockets for funds. According to Pruss, the new \$290,000 facility is no exception. Producers on test will be paying for the building at a rate of one penny per cow for the next 15 years hiking the average testing cost to \$1.11 per cow.

Pruss also reported that a butterfat test rate increase from 14 cents to 21 cents is expected in the near future to help defray costs of equipment purchase, new field personnel and maintenance.

Another major change producers can expect, said Pruss, is the expansion of protein testing. The lab tests about 12,000 samples for protein content and Pruss said he expects to go to all protein testing by October 1982.

Following the ribbon cutting ceremony, which enlisted the help of Smith, Butler and Robert Patterson, senior vice president of Penn State, guests and visitors

were treated to a walking tour.

First stop featured an overview of the laboratory, hosted by lab manager Dean Amick. Guests watched as 20 samples were hand-loaded on a tray and then automatically stirred and measured by machines. Milk components and amounts appeared on computer screens throughout the lab.

The majority of the milk testing equipment, said Amick, was designed in England. The combination of an efficient staff and automated equipment processes more than 1,250 fat tests per hour. Amick explained that 52 percent of all samples undergo Somatic Cell Count tests, while just four percent are protein tested.

In a small room adjacent to the expansive laboratory, Ray Pruss explained the Series One computer, an efficient data transmitter, not found in any other DHIA lab in the country. The system stores all the information produced by the lab and transmits, via telephone line, to Penn State's computer center on campus where the barn sheets are printed.

The direct transmission, said Pruss eliminated the need for key punching, thus reducing the number of people involved by three. With minimal chance for

human error, the system is 99.99 percent error free, Pruss noted.

A 5 inch by 7 inch piece of film, or micro fishe, is all that is needed to contain 250 monthly herd reports. Dixie Burris demonstrated the use of micro fishe when used under a viewing screen. The small film can be called up on a screen and a variety of reports ranging from monthly reports to cow indexes can be read.

Owen Etter introduced the group to the receiving area, where more than 15,000 samples arrive every day. Etter explained that less than one percent of all samples shipped are actually damaged. The huge quantity of samples arrive through United Parcel Service, but Etter recalled a strike by UPS years ago that left supervisors no choice but to either mail the samples or personally deliver.

The tour ended in the facility's meter testing room, which was previously located in one of Penn State's dairy barns. Special equipment in the room test supervisors' milk meters for broken or worn parts and balance, said fieldman John Kline. Last year, Kline said he tested more than 1,900 meters.

The state DHIA recommends that supervisors with more than 25 herds per month have equipment tested twice a year, said Kline. He also noted that all new meters must be tested before first use. Currently, four different meter types are used in Pennsylvania herds.

The state DHIA board, headed by Butler and staffed by 18 other producers around the state, include: Vice President — J. Robert Kindig, Lancaster Co.; Treasurer — Ellis Denlinger, Lancaster Co.; Secretary — Jay Howes, Centre Co.; Directors — Milan Pavkov,

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DHIA staffer Owen Etter displays one of hundreds of milk sample packages that arrive in the center every day. Etter estimated more than 15,000 milk samples pass through the receiving doors, daily. He noted that less than one percent of the samples arrive damaged.



This small piece of film contains more than 200 monthly herd reports. When entered into the machine, below, each report is magnified for easy observation. Dixie Burris, a DHIA staff member, explains that the small film, known as micro fishe can also store USDA Cow Index, 6-month lactations, herd summaries, reproduction management reports and lab data.



Shirley Houser of Bellefonte, one of 27 employees that helps operate the new facility, they can be stirred and analyzed for butterfat and somatic cell count. loads milk samples into a sectioned tray before



Dean Amick, left, surveys a roomful of sophisticated milk testing equipment in the laboratory. Amick, lab manager, stands before a machine that automatically stirs samples and records butterfat and somatic cell content.