

Dairy Pipeline

(Continued from Page C3)

Quick Returns at Least Cost

If cash flow is your problem, the last thing you need is more debt! What you need is a good quick return at least cost. The best way I know of attaining this is by putting good quality feeds through high producing cows - make that a goal in your farm plan.

The highest levels of production may not be the most profitable, but high levels of production generally are more profitable. High producing cows require the best of care, and not every dairy farmer has the ability nor the dedication that is necessary to sustain high levels of production in a herd. At high levels of production, the herd can fall apart quickly if it is not cared for properly, and that can be expensive.

High production can be thought of as playing in the big leagues. There is little room for error. In other words, you have to learn to play like a big leaguer; you have to know what you are doing, or follow the advice of someone who does.

Good cows also give a quicker return on the feed dollar than do heifers, unless you are selling a lot of high priced breeding stock. For most producers heifers are nothing more than a necessary expense for obtaining herd replacements. Feeding more heifers than they need is an unnecessary and added expense.

Stunting heifers by raising them in over-crowded, poorly maintained, stuffy facilities, or under-feeding them and neglecting them can be very costly. Holding heifers off so they'll calve at an older age is also expensive.

If you are short on land,

facilities, and feed, and if you need to improve cash flow, you'll probably do better feeding fewer heifers and more cows, even if you have to purchase a few replacements. True, it is cheaper to raise replacements than to buy them, but it may not be more profitable.

By feeding two less heifers and giving that feed to a good cow you may be able to quickly improve your cash flow situation by as much as \$1200, even after buying some additional feed which the cow will need. Needless to say, reducing the size of the heifer herd has to be done with caution. You still need replacements, good replacements, to take the place of cows that should be culled.

This figure simply indicates that good cows are more profitable than heifers. It is expensive to keep more heifers than what you need, especially if you stunt them in the process. With a \$1200 margin to play with, it may pay you to just milk cows and buy your replacements, especially if you are short on home grown feeds and can find good healthy replacements for a good price.

If you are over-crowded and short on feed, and have more heifers than you really need, concentrate your efforts on raising fewer, but growthier heifers. Reduce the size of your heifer herd. Give the extra feed to the remaining heifers. You won't save any feed, but chances are, the remaining heifers will mature faster, calve earlier, produce better and stay in the herd longer.

And, if they stay in the herd longer that reduces your expenses because you have less need for replacements, and the heifers will

reward you with extra profit-making lactations in their lifetime. It could mean as much as five times more profit per year of life if the growthy heifer calved 6 months earlier, maintained a 2000 pound production advantage each lactation, and stayed in the herd two lactations longer than a stunted heifer!

Concentrate on keeping the milking herd healthy and productive so they'll stay around longer. It requires about two lactations for most cows to break even in their lifetime; that's a long time! Thus, a four-lactation cow will earn you at least twice as much profit as a three-lactation cow. A six-lactation cow will be at least four to five times more profitable, and will require only half as many replacements.

The older cows are also more productive as they reach maturity. That generally means more profit with each succeeding lactation. So, as we try to improve short term profits, let's also invest in long term profits, too. Breed for good sound, productive cows. Develop a good preventive herd health program that helps heifers calve earlier, helps cows to conceive better, helps to keep mastitis down, and helps to keep cows in the herd longer.

Of course, you'll also need a good feeding program and the best of care if you expect your cows to reach their genetic potential.

MMI returns \$1.65 million to members

STRONGSVILLE, Oh — Nearly \$1.65 million of equity refunds will be returned to the dairy farmer members of Milk Marketing Inc. during the month of December, according to Don Schriver, director of membership relations and public affairs for MMI.

The board of directors has approved the cash returns to the members at the recently held board meeting in Strongsville, OH, home office location of MMI.

"With this refund for 1982 the total redemption from MMI to its members will be more than \$9.3 million since MMI was organized in 1978," said Schriver.

The current redemption will be to members and inactive former members who had been with the Miami Valley Milk Producers Association, Central Ohio Cooperative Milk Producers, MILK, Inc., Cincinnati Cooperative Milk Sales Association Inc., and Wayne Cooperative Milk Producers Inc. under a plan developed before the 1978 merger. All equities with the total value of more than \$18 million from the predecessor cooperatives

will be redeemed by 1988, according to Schriver.

"This is in line with board policy to have a 10 year revolving plan for member financing of the cooperative. The ability to redeem member equities is the result of MMI's commitment to keep the ownership in the hands of the users. Redemptions are paid 100 percent in cash," explained Schriver.

The December 1982 refund figures do not reflect patronage refunds for the year ending June 30, 1982. Additional allocations will be determined by the MMI board of directors at a later date.



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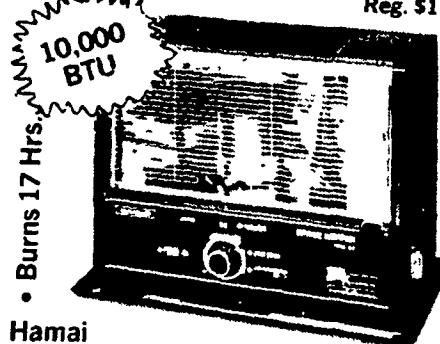
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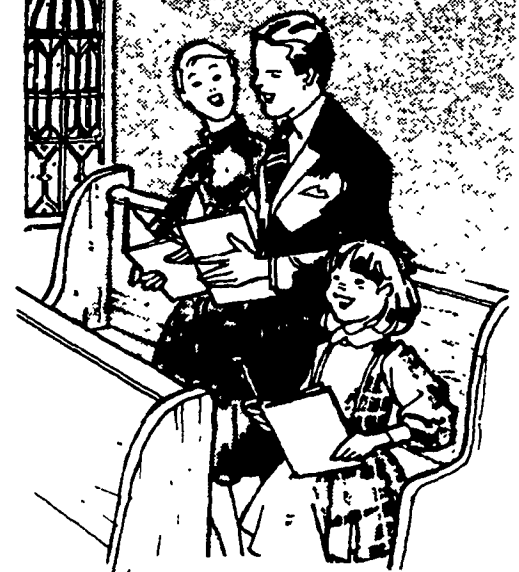
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