

3X milking improves production & health

BY DICK ANGLESTEIN
LANCASTER — A pair of 3X milkers from Lancaster County — one still on the grueling schedule and another who has gone off — sang the praises of the triple barn time on Monday.

J. Kenneth Hershey, Kinzer, and Robert H. Kauffman, Elizabethtown, told of their experiences during the opening session of Lancaster Dairy Days at the Farm and Home Center.

With tongue in cheek, Kauffman explained one of the advantages: "It's nice being in the barn for the late milking at 10 p.m. and not having any salesmen come."

But both Hershey, who is still on the 3X schedule since last July, and Kauffman, who was on it for a year and a half and now off it for the past year and a half, admit there are other definite advantages.

The main pluses are the increase in production and better herd health.

The main disadvantage, of course, is the extra labor requirement. Their main advice concerning labor was not to attempt 3X milking with the same number of people who might be doing the more traditional milking twice a day.

"It does get burdensome and you better have extra help," Kauffman said.

Hershey added a herdsman before he went on the triple schedule.

"We haven't been sorry that we went on it," he said.

"It improved the health. The main thing was the breeding end of it, particularly the silent heats. There was a lot less stress on those 70-lb. milking heifers and the 120-lb. cows."

Kauffman echoed the reduction in stress.

"It's especially good for those first-calf heifers," he said.

"We had some milking up to 100 lbs. a day and there's not as much stress."

"I can't recall one serious case of mastitis during the time we were on it."

Next, panel moderator Glenn Shirk, Extension dairy agent, turned to the amount of extra milk from 3X milking.

Hershey estimated a 15 percent overall increase and 20 percent higher among fresh cows.

"We had a cow that always peaked at about 95 lbs.," Hershey said.

"After she freshened, she's at 40 or 42 lbs. a milking."

Kauffman explained that when they went on the schedule other changes were also made, such as new facilities and feeding.

"But there's no doubt that the biggest part of the increase came from the 3X milking," Kauffman said.

"We were milking about a 17,000-lb. average before and in one year went to over 20,000. Now, we've slipped back to about 18,000 after going off."

He further explained there were having some calving and breeding problems, which were not related to the schedule.

Both dairymen went to 3X feeding, too. Hershey fed the same total grain but a little more forage. Kauffman went to total mix three times a day with a top dressing of grain to producers over 60 lbs.

Both dairymen said they were pleased with the 3X schedule — when the labor requirements can



Lancaster Dairy Days panel members for discussion of 3X milking include, clockwise, Glenn Shirk, dairy agent moderator; J. Kenneth Hershey, Kinzer; and Robert H. Kauffman, Elizabethtown.

be worked out. Hershey explained he and his wife went on a short vacation and

when they came back were greeted with these words from their herdsman:

"I'm sure glad to see you. I didn't get anything besides the milking done."

Lancaster Dairy Days highlight management

LANCASTER — From fans to flies and from gams to genetics, a variety of speakers covered the gamut of production management at Lancaster Dairy Days Monday at the Farm and Home Center.

A full-house audience heard no less than 10 speakers cover that many different management topics.

Here's a brief summation from these talks:

Larry Hutchinson, Penn State Extension veterinarian, outlined a vaccination program, stressing the vaccines that most frequently need to be used and when they should be used.

The vaccines he stressed as most needed are the IBR-PI3, Lepto and Brucellosis, particularly when bringing animals into the herd.

Many of the other vaccines are needed when particular diseases are diagnosed.

"It's best to develop a vaccination program with the vet specifically for your herd, depending on particular requirements," Hutchinson said.

"Then review and update it twice a year."

Robert Graves, Penn State ag engineer, covered cow comfort.

"Remember, there's a difference between a distribution system and a good ventilation system," he said.

"An air distribution system does not manufacture fresh air."

Feeding was discussed by Richard Erdman, dairy nutritionist from the University of Maryland.

Erdman cautioned dairymen may be cutting off their nose to spite their face if they decide to cut protein in the ration for short term savings.

"I urge you not to look at cutting protein to save money," he said.

"Cutting protein intake definitely decreases digestibility."

He said the most basic thing that farmers can do to be more feed cost efficient is to improve their forage through better harvest timing.

He leaned toward high moisture ear corn to use the cob as a fibre source to improve fat test. As far as alternate feeds are concerned, he said a good look must be taken if they are both nutritionally and economically feasible.

Reproductive efficiency was explained by Mike O'Connor, Penn State dairy specialist.

"If you want to stress one thing in your breeding program, make it

improved heat detection," he said. "If you do that, the other things will fall in line."

He held up 80 percent as the goal that dairymen should strive for concerning heat detections.

Harry Roth, president of the National Association of Animal Breeders, outlined the updating of the genetic base, which will first be shown in the sire summary in January, 1974.

"The updating is due to the inflation that has taken place in the bull proofs over the past 10 years, similar to the inflation in the

dollar," he explained. Genetic growth has shown about a 1000-lb. increase since 1974.

All bulls will go back to zero and sire summaries will be adjusted accordingly. Bulls will still be proportionately ranked in the same way but will have lower numerical ratings. Some of the old-timer bulls could come out minus.

Cow indexes will also be adjusted back to a new base.

Linear trait appraisal was reviewed by Ronald Long, of Select Sires.

He explained that individual cow traits will now just be described

and not show a preference of one over another or comparing it to some fictitious ideal cow.

"This is a step in the right direction and is just some of what will be happening in the future in trait evaluation," he said.

In other discussions, the different types of flies and how to control them were covered by Sharon Barnett, of ICI Americas, and Lancaster Dairy Agent Glenn Shirk set the stage for the day with a review of dollars and sense decisions facing dairymen in the 80's.—DA

Panel urges farmers to act on milk surplus

BY DEBBIE KOONTZ

LANCASTER — When the milk surplus was recorded at 1.7 percent in 1979, dairy specialists became concerned, but as the percentage increased to last year's high of 10.2 percent, the concern slowly turned to bewilderment causing these same specialists to reciprocate with farmers for answers.

"What are you going to do about the surplus?" was the question asked by a panel of seven dairy representatives at Lancaster's Dairy Day, Tuesday, as they reiterated the same question the almost 200 dairy farmers gathered had asked them.

During the morning session, Truman Graf, agricultural economist from the University of Wisconsin, said everyone's responsible. "Everybody is pointing the finger at everyone else, but it's all our problem."

To support his statement, Graf pointed to statistics indicating an increase in dairy cow numbers for the first time since 1953.

USDA's recent Farm Paper Letter agrees with his statistics and says "Though the number of all cattle and calves on U.S. farms may be down from five years ago, dairy cattle numbers are up according to the annual cattle in-

ventory. At 11,066,000 head, dairy cow numbers are up one percent from the 10,939,000 recorded in 1978. And that rise is sharper in the top dairy states."

A breakdown in the increase of dairy cattle in the top five states

according to USDA reads thus:

- Wisconsin has 1,830,000 head today, up one percent from the 1,810,000 head of five years ago.
- California, which now has 940,000 head, had only 846,000 in

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On Tuesday afternoon, Lancaster County Dairy Days featured this panel of dairy specialists discussing the milk surplus and answering farmers' questions. The panel includes from left, Truman Graf, ag economist from the University of Wisconsin; Lynn Stalbaum, National Milk Producers Federation; Edward Coughlin, director of Ag Marketing Service with USDA's dairy division; Henry Geisinger, Pa. Assn. of Milk Dealers; George Brumbaugh, Pa. Milk Marketing Board; Boyd Cook, Dairymen, Inc.; and Alpheus Roth, Lehigh Valley Farms.