

Chester Co. Dairy Day stresses need for efficiency

BY TISH WILLIAMS
GUTHRIESVILLE — An update on the latest farm management technology and programs available to increase the efficiency of dairy farm management was given to over 100 farmers Wednesday at the Chester County Dairy Day.

Sponsored by the Penn State and Chester County Cooperative Extension Service, the program featured a panel of five speakers who stressed the need for efficient management.

"The management tool of the '80's" is how Penn State Dairy Specialist, Jud Heinrichs, referred to on-farm computers. In a talk on "What Computers Can Do For You," Heinrichs said on-farm computers can be used for herd management, ration balancing, accounting, crop records, inventory management and fun.

Personal computers are becoming easier to use and less expensive to buy, he said. The sales of personal computers is projected to increase dramatically in the next three years.

He cautioned farmers considering purchasing a personal computer to shop around because of the many models that are available.

"Find the software programs you want first, then buy the hardware that will run it," Heinrichs told dairymen. "There are between 250-300 software programs currently available that are applicable to Pennsylvania dairymen."

While the cost of computerized feeders for a small herd might be difficult to justify, almost any size farm could benefit from a personal computer in the office for management, he said.

Computers allow for daily monitoring of records. Computerized feeders and milking systems allows farmers to manage by exception. A daily check quickly lists cows that have fallen off in milk production or aren't eating properly.

Computers help to put needed

management data in orderly files that can be easily accessed.

Heinrichs also spoke on the importance of monitoring calf and heifer growth. He recommended that dairymen spend one afternoon each year weighing and measuring replacement heifers. Each county Extension office has measuring sticks, weight tapes and recording forms available for use by dairymen. The completed recording form can be sent to Penn State where the data will be plotted on a graph against the breed standards for height and weight.

How nutrition affects reproduction was the subject of a presentation made by Mike O'Connor, Penn State reproduction specialist. A properly balanced diet not only improves milk production, it is essential for good reproduction.

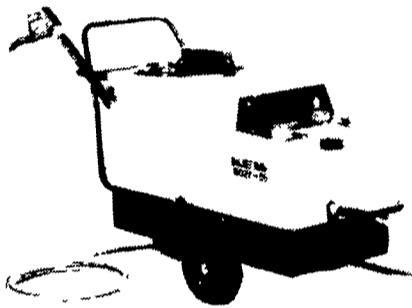
Research has demonstrated that excessive protein in the ration increases the number of days open

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Speakers at the Chester County Dairy Day are pictured here with Cheryl Fairbairn, Chester Co. Extension agent and program coordinator. From the left are, Jud Hendricks, Jack J. Kirkland, Cheryl Fairbairn, Nelson Stoltzfus, and Mike O'Connor.

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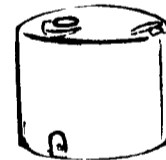
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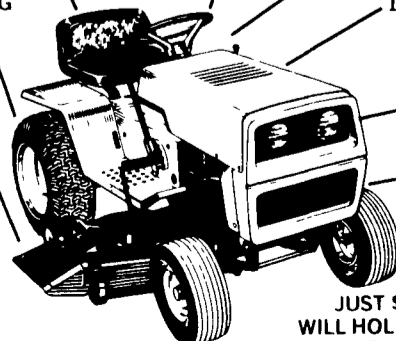
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