

# New Zealand farmer describes his dairy operation

NEENAH, Wisc. — Len Scott isn't an ordinary farmer. Besides milking 470 cows in an hour and 20 minutes, Len and his wife Gwen run an operation that could change your ideas about dairy farming and their native New Zealand.

Currently on a 2½ month tour of America, the Scotts spoke recently at an evening program sponsored by Nu Pulse America. Scott startled his audience as he nonchalantly reported his milking time.

"We're starting milking in the morning at about 6:10 if we're lucky, and we're in to breakfast at 7:45," Scott said. "That's 470 cows with 3 operators." That includes the ten minutes it takes for washing up and hosing down the yard.

Just two years ago, the Scotts installed an innovative 60-bale rotary dairy platform, equipped with Nu Pulse milkers. Today they proudly credit their system for a list of improvements in addition to the faster milking, including better herd health, better milking out, cleaner conditions, and happier cows.

Gwen Scott recalls one incident that occurred a few months after installing the large rotary. A cow that was supposed to be sent back to the yard slipped past the gate.

"We turned off the platform, and both of us headed out to bring her back. We must have had a five minute run around."

Not knowing what to expect on returning to the rotary, Mrs. Scott said they found "60 cows calmly standing on the platform with the cups on. There wasn't a dung around the place nor a set of cups off. They weren't even kicking or bucking. I might add we didn't get the darn cow back either."

Scott also reported less cup fall-off since switching to Nu Pulse milkers two years ago. "About 1800 teat cups would be put on and at the very outside six drop in the time 1800 are put on." Scott added that farmers that he's talked to during his tour are experiencing the same satisfaction under American conditions.

"What we've found here is that cows seem to enjoy the machine, so it follows up with what we've found and have been told by other users in New Zealand that cows like it."

Gwen Scott added her praises, saying "I don't think we get teat burn around the orifice that we used to."

"Years ago, we used to milk the old conventional way," Scott recalled, "where we had cows in a separate stall, two cows at a time,

with what we call a 'walk through.'" Once the cow was milked, the door opened, and the cow walked out.

In the early 1960's, the change was made to the herringbone system. "We were milking 14 cows a side on the herringbone, and we changed to a 22-bale platform rotary dairy."

At the point of milking 295 cows in 2¼ hours, they had reached that platform's capacity, so the 60-bale rotary was put in.

Of 85 heifers, only four had to be led onto the platform their first time aboard. Scott's only problem with the rotary has been waking the cows when it's time to get off. So he added one innovation. A shower hose jets a very fine spray of water on the pipes over which the cow puts her head.

The dual purpose is to keep the milking pipes wet so the cow's slobber won't stick, and it also acts as a reminder to the cow when it's time to get off. If she goes one bale too far, she gets a spray over the nose, and it wakes her up, and she gets off. An overhead sprayer, taken from an old weed sprayer, directs a water spray onto the platform to clear any soiling before it sticks.

The operator putting the cups on has 6½ to 7 seconds to put a set of



New Zealand dairy farmer Len Scott talks "farmer to farmer" with his American counterparts. Currently touring U.S. dairy farms, Scott tells how he and his wife, Gwen, milk 470 cows in an hour and 20 minutes.

teat cups on the cow. Since the cows enter and face the center of the platform, the Scotts find it faster to place the teat cups on through the hind legs. Scott admits that for American dairymen, the idea takes some getting used to.

It's faster and most of the animal health work is done by the take-off operator. This, too, may seem backwards, but Scott finds so little

udder care needed that the takeoff man can handle it quite easily. With the cleaner environment, the cows come in much cleaner.

Responding to a question from a veterinarian in the audience, Scott explained that the practice of bobbing the tails is quite common there.

"If you don't have that switch going through the excrement that comes from the rear of the cow, you don't get dirt around that area. If you don't have dirt, you don't have flies. It's as simple as that, and it works. And besides, you have a much cleaner udder to work on."

As the cow backs off the platform and exits, she has to straddle a galvanized V-shaped piece which is raised about nine inches. In doing so, she passes an electric eye which triggers a shot of spray onto the cow's udder. The same device has an automatic counter to record the number of cows milked. Without it, it is difficult to keep a count because of the odd cow that doesn't milk out in one circuit. In that case, they simply clip a nylon rope across the back of the bale, leave the teat cups on, and she goes

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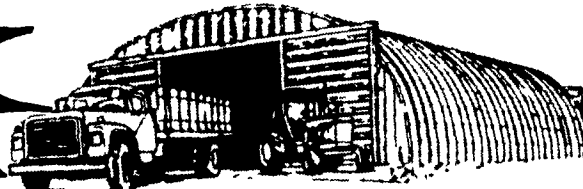
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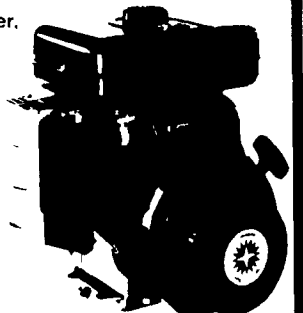
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