

Trigon Parlor Proves to be a Three-Sided Marvel

BY BARBARA RADER

Butler County Correspondent

VOLANT — Trigon parlors have been described as three-sided marvels. The Martin Brothers, Lawrence County, can attest to this statement even though their trigon milking parlor has been operational for only five months.

Combining the parlor with a computerized feeder, also operational for only five months, has saved three tons of feed and

increased milk production by one ton.

The Martin Brothers, Dave and Dick, have been milking cows for 28 years in a 25 tie-stall barn with a pipeline system. They decided to renovate following a five year decision making process where they explored possible parlor designs and other options.

"Milkers' knees" and saving time were the two main reasons for the brothers to eventually decide on the trigon parlor design.

This addition became the focal point of a five part remodeling operation. Included in a 28-by-60 pole building are a parlor holding area, milk house, utility room and an office.

While the physical expansion was the most visible change, other changes have occurred as a direct effect of the addition.

Most noticeable has been the 2,000 pound increase in the herd average although the number of cows has remained the same. Since its completion in January, the herd average has reached 17,500 pounds of milk and 650 pounds of fat on 125 head. This average is up considerably from its previous level of 15,500 pounds of milk and 575 pounds of fat in December.

"We were told we would have a great increase, but we didn't really think that it would go up a ton!" Dave stated. The herd has been running a 3.9 percent test most of the time and milk is picked up every day from their 1,000 gallon tank, he added.

Milking time has also been reduced by an hour with the 16-stall Trigon parlor. Now, only 1½ hours are required to milk the herd of registered Holsteins and Brown Swiss.

One of the time-saving features of the parlor is automatic take-off. With this feature, only two people are required in the parlor at milking time. Under optimum conditions, up to 100 cows per hour can be milked with this system.

Six stalls are located on two sides, with four stalls on the third side. This parlor was bought by the Martin brothers from a farm in Ohio where 18 stalls were used. Two stalls were removed from the third side of parlor in order to fit it into building. Also on the third side, the back wall, a 36 inch ventilation fan was installed.

In use in the parlor is a 60-40 alternating pulsation; a three-inch, stainless steel, milk lowline; a 10 horsepower vacuum pump; and a four-inch PVC vacuum line. Adding to the time saving characteristic of the parlor is a clean-in-place system.

No feeding is done in the parlor as the cows receive all a complete ration in the 76-by-122, 105-stall, freestall barn in use on the farm. The cows are fed haylage and corn silage toppedressed with minerals at a 90 foot feeder that runs through the middle of the barn.

Protein is fed with a recently added computerized feeder.

Five stations, or feeders, are used to feed high moisture corn and soybean meal. The corn is stored in poly bin and the soybean meal is stored in a homemade wooden bin. Feed is moved from the bins to the stations by an auger system.

Blaine, David's son, records all needed information from the latest DHIA sheets. Also used with the computer is a simplified keyboard and printer.

Breeding information and feeding records, also recorded in the computer, can be read anytime. Feeding records change approximately every 12 hours as consumption data on each cow is received. A cow not eating can easily be spotted as her number and the amount of feed she has consumed during the day is always right before them.

Presently, with the com-

puterized feeding system targeting the individual cow's nutritional needs, they have reduced the amount of soybean meal fed by over three tons per month. In spite of this reduction in feed, the milk production continues to climb. With production continuing to rise, and the computerized feeder saving money for the brothers, the five year decision making period appears to be time wisely spent.



Part of the automation in the Trigon parlor are automatic take-offs and a clean-in-place system shown here.



Five stalls are used with the computerized feeder in the 125 cow herd.



Blaine, Dave Martin's son, checks on the computer. He handles the programming and operating of the computer.



The Martins grow all of the feed used on the farm. They farm a total of 1,100 acres of which 400 is used to grow corn and 250 acres is used to raise hay. Dave Martin is busy filling silo here.

Butler County Correspondent Barbara Rader

Barbara Rader has served as the Lancaster Farming Correspondent in Lawrence, Butler, Beaver and Mercer counties for over two years.

Coverage of dairy, livestock and home features, as well as a variety of meetings, sales and fairs has provided her with some "memorable experiences."

She is a 1969 graduate of Conneaut High School and married her husband, Harold Rader, in the fall of the same year. They joined his parents in a partnership on the elder Raders' dairy farm. Presently Harold and Barbara own a herd of 60 cows, registered Holsteins and registered Ayrshires, near Connoquenessing. They own about 180 acres and farm an additional 200 acres that lies within a three mile radius of the home farm.

Barbara is the mother of four children, Lona, 15, Harold Jr., 14, Sharon, 8, and John, 4. Another "farm product" is due in October.

She has been active in 4-H since age seven and is currently a nine-year leader of the Butler County-Wide 4-H Dairy Club. She has served on the Northwest 4-H District Dairy Committee and was the District Show Chairman on the 1985 show. Barbara has also been the district representative for the Pennsylvania Junior Dairy Show.

She was one of the original committee members, and chaired the first annual Northwest District Two Day Dairy



Barbara Rader

Workshop.

For five years she had held the position of Pennsylvania Ayrshire Youth Coordinator. Prior to this, she served several years on the state's youth committee. "Many activities and programs have been focused on the state's youth since my leadership has begun," Barbara notes.

In addition to this, she was the Pennsylvania Youth Committee Chairman for the successful 1986 National Ayrshire Convention and Sale. In this role, she organized activities and programs for the youth at the Convention.

She is a member of the Penn-Agri Women as well as several other farm organizations.

"I enjoy photography, activities with our children, crafts, sewing, and the family's hobby-vacation of showing Ayrshires and Holsteins," she said.

Options Seminar To Highlight Penn Ag Grain Meeting

EPHRATA — William Barclay, marketing manager for agriculture and metals complexes of the Chicago Board of Trade, will be the special guest speaker at Penn Ag Industries' annual Grain Meeting to be held on June 30, at 7 p.m. at the Shawnee-Lancaster Resort Inn, located on Route 222-

North of Lancaster. (Note: the Shawnee was formerly the Conestoga-Lancaster Resort Inn.)

Barclay will also be conducting a seminar on Agricultural Options from 3 p.m. - 5 p.m. prior to the Grain Meeting.

The Options Seminar includes a review of the principles of hedging,

minimum price contracts, and concepts and applications involving options on agricultural futures. The latter half of the session will discuss applications of trading strategies for today's markets.

For more information contact Amy Jo Newell, 717-733-2238.