



# Dairy Pipeline

By  
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Agent

Your cows actually help you add value to that crop by converting it to milk. Thus, we need to ask ourselves "How does my work in the field affect the herd and its ability to produce milk efficiently?" The kind and variety of crops selected, yields and planting dates, pest control, fertility and harvesting practices have an effect on this.

What does this mean to us as we get busy in the field? Later on, as we approach ryelage and hay harvesting time, we may find it beneficial to halt corn planting or tillage operations in order to get the rye and alfalfa harvested at the precise time for optimum quality.

Remember, the one best feed for high levels of efficient milk production is lots of high quality forages. We have but a few days to perform those critical spring harvests. Delaying corn planting a few days will probably be far less costly than missing those precious harvesting opportunities.

Many dairymen have discovered the benefit of spending more time in the barn attending to the many details that are necessary for sustaining high levels of efficient milk production. Those jobs are still important to do, as is the field work. The challenge is deciding where the best help is needed and assigning and performing jobs accordingly. Rather than doing everything yourself, it may be profitable to hire some labor to perform some of the less critical jobs, or perhaps a custom operator can be hired to do some of the field work so you have more time to spend with the herd. Perhaps some of the barn chores can be automated; automatic grain feeders is one example. The use of total mix rations to reduce the number of

feedings necessary per day is another example.

Controlling mastitis takes time and effort. This is one area that is frequently slighted as we get busy in the field. Easing up on sanitation, milking technique, equipment maintenance, etc. can be the open door that gives an infectious organism the opportunity to get a good foothold in the herd. That can be very costly!

It's also important to maintain your herd vaccination schedules. Of particular concern in the spring of the year is vaccinating the herd for leptos.

### Pasture Concerns

As you turn cattle out to pasture, there are several other things to think about. Cattle should be dewormed about three weeks after first turned out to pasture, and then dewormed a second time about three weeks later. A third deworming is advised at the end of the grazing period, as they are stabled for the winter.

John's disease is another concern. To prevent young stock from ingesting manure of older cattle, heifers should not be grazed with older cattle. Nor should they be grazed after older cattle in a rotational grazing system. If hay is clipped off of pastures, the clip-

pings should not be fed to heifers. Similarly, manger sweepings from older cattle should be fed to young heifers, and manure should not be spread on pastures.

As cows are turned out to pasture, be sure to balance their rations properly. Monitor herd health and production closely. If production improves, try to determine if something was not quite right with the winter feeding program. If so, make a note to correct the situation next year. Be sure to balance rations accordingly.

Most of the emphasis thus far has been on production. We also need to focus on marketing. This is particularly important this spring as we face the possibility of a sharp decline in milk prices. It's a time we all need to stick together in a united way to strengthen ongoing efforts to bargain effectively for higher over order prices.

With all the hustle and bustle of spring, let us also take time to be safe, to preserve those precious moments of family enjoyment and reflect with faith on the life that lies ahead.

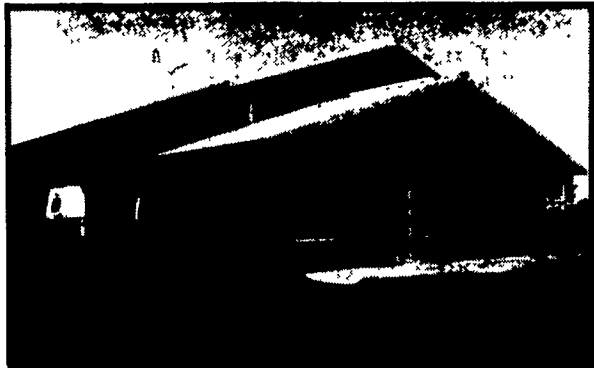
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## Ag Baby Presented Farm Products

Baby girl Ashley Mullen, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. John Mullen, was the first baby born at Lancaster General Hospital on National Agriculture Day, March 20. On behalf of farmers every-

where, the Lancaster County Farmers Association presented the new baby's family with a box of farm products from Lancaster County.

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