

# 30 YEARS AGO

## THIS WEEK

-Each year, every distribution station of Eastern States Farmers' Exchange elects one member to attend the cooperative's annual meeting in Springfield, Mass., and to become one of its own advisory committeemen for three years.

At a mail ballot this winter, members of the station at Bird-in-Hand elected Amos G. Ranck, Strasburg, for this honor. They named John E. Kreider, Lancaster, and Harry M. Landis, Lancaster, as first and second alternates, one of which will attend the 1960 annual

meeting if the elected member is unable to. The meeting this year will be March 4-5 in Springfield, Mass.

-Funds allocated to the Department of Agriculture by the State have not been earmarked for any specific purpose. The division of those funds is up to the secretary, Senator Edward Kessler told the sixteen members of the Lancaster County Association attending the luncheon for the local legislators at the Hotel Douglas on Thursday.

-Newly elected officers of the

Elizabethtown Valley chapter of Future Farmers of America as they were inducted by members of the Manheim Chapter on Monday night. They are: Carl Hoover, Elizabethtown R1, secretary; Dennis Garber, 737 Groff Ave., Elizabethtown, president; Foster Noll, Jr., Bainbridge R1, vice-president. Manheim officers are as follows: Wilbur Hossler, Manheim R3, president; David Keener, chaplain, Elizabethtown R1; Marlin Henninger, teacher of vocational agriculture at Elizabethtown Area High School; Paul Wolgemuth, sentinal, Elizabethtown R3, and Carl Myer, Lititz R2, secretary of the Manheim Chapter. The officers from Manheim initiated 22 new greenhands into the FFA during the same meeting.

# Robotic Milking Announced At Dairy Day

BY SHARON B. SCHUSTER  
Maryland Correspondent  
WESTMINSTER, Md. — "This is the age of the smart machine." So declared Rick Van Rinsum, representative of Gascoigne-Melotte, developers of the world's first robotic milking system now in use in Holland. Van Rinsum introduced the space-age system to participants of the tri-county Dairy Day which attracted 105 registrants from Baltimore, Carroll and Howard counties.

ground her and she is gently pushed into place by a rear mobile gate. She receives her ration at eating speed during the milking, with quantity and dispensing all handled by computer and automation.

The cow's rear legs are positioned by a moveable platform. A rotating brush appears from the rear and cleans the udder with a 45 second forward and backward cleaning. Two robotic arms then present the milkers through the rear legs, position them according to pre-determined coordinates, and lift them to the teats. A unique inflatable inner lining within the milkers insures that the teats are correctly positioned before milking begins. The videotape showed a contented cow, calmly eating her ration and leaving the stall no worse for the wear.

The RMS monitors milk output from each quarter and even diverts milk not fit for human consumption to another tank. Information about each cow and her production is recorded for the dairyman to use. "You have to interact with it," explained Van Rinsum of the system.

Why was the system developed in Holland? Dairying in the Netherlands is increasingly more difficult and stressful for the farmer according to Van Rinsum. Computer feeding and identification was introduced in Holland in the 1970s. Eighty percent of Holland's feed is imported. When the Netherlands met head on with a strong dollar, the computer feeding systems were implemented to save feed costs.

Van Rinsum further explained that a quota law in 1985 required dairymen to perform with less cows, less milk and less fat to produce milk for 14 million people with two million cows. "There was a lot of stress on dairymen to perform. The pressure on the dairymen in Holland is the reason robotic dairying has been so well developed there."

And the cost of this space-age "smart machine"? Van Rinsum estimates it to be "around \$90,000, but it could be much more or much less."

Carroll County extension agent, Stan Fultz, made the observation that the RMS may eliminate labor problems on small farms. County farmers have experienced great difficulty in finding and keeping reliable long-term laborers for their dairy operations.



Rick Van Rinsum

Van Rinsum announced that the University of Maryland will be the site of the prototype for the robotic milking system (RMS), having obtained exclusive rights to research and development. "The research will hopefully bring about new choices," added Van Rinsum.

The RMS is designed to give per cow information, per cow automation and it is milking equipment. Gascoigne-Melotte has been using the RMS in Holland, housed in a thirty-cow free stall barn, with 2x milking since December 8, 1989.

The cow enters a system of gates. Through computer information she wears on a collar, she is identified and the computer determines whether she is ready for milking. If the cow is not ready, she is routed to an exit, by means of a gentle automated push in one direction.

Ready to be milked, the cow is directed through the proper gate to her individual feeding trough. She is re-identified. The gates close

## Child Care Seminar Set

CREAMERY (Montgomery Co.)— Directing a child care center or nursery school requires not only skills in child development and people skills, it also requires administrative skills. Penn State Cooperative Extension is offering a one-day seminar for child care directors on March 1, at Bentley's Restaurant in North Wales. Registration begins at 9 a.m. and the workshop is from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

The day will begin with Russell Powell, extension agent for business management, speaking on personnel issues and what legally can and cannot be done when hiring or dismissing employees.

Jeff Patton, extension agent of

marketing, is to provide tips on marketing programs to attract families and keep enrollment up.

Kate Woodley, professor in management development at Penn State University, will focus on motivating staff to prevent turnover and low morale.

There will also be a panel discussion on operational policies different directors are using.

The cost is \$25 and includes lunch, a book, and reference materials. Participants will receive a half of a CEU from Penn State University. To receive a free brochure, call the Montgomery County Extension office at 489-4315, or the Bucks County office at 345-3283.

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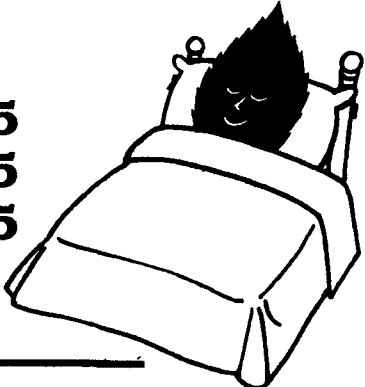
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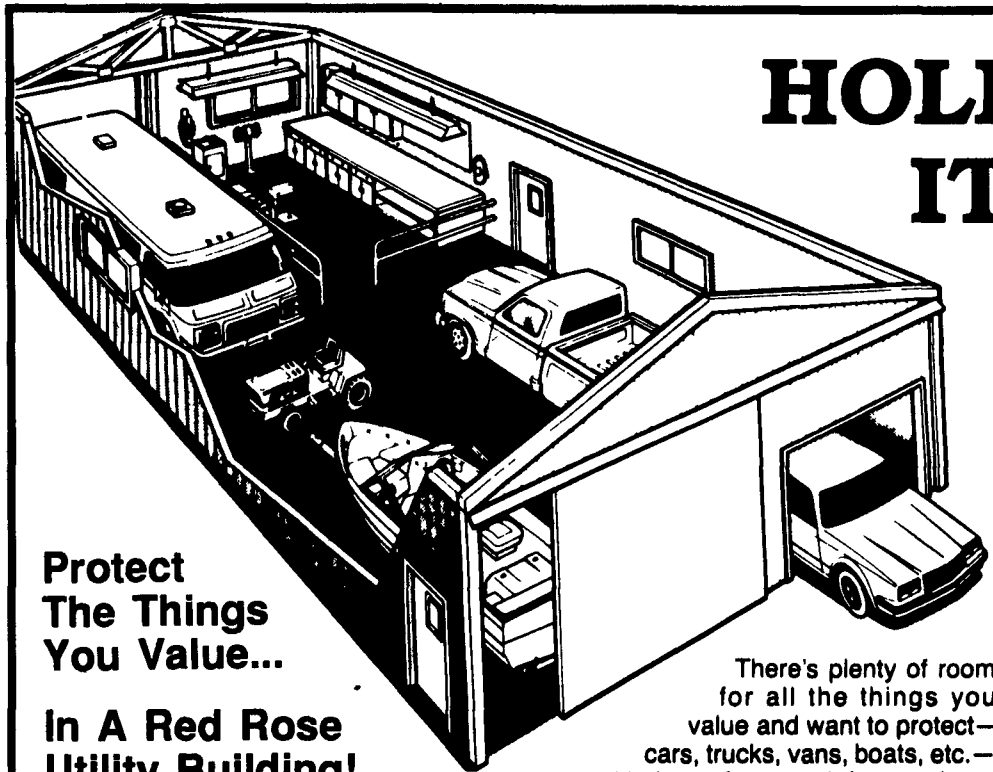
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