

Cow Care Big Factor In Lowering SCC

ANDY ANDREWS
Lancaster Farming Staff
LORETTO (Cambria Co.) — Individual cow care, and knowing how to keep the animals clean and well fed, helped boost Valewood Dairy to a somatic cell count (SCC) of 90,000 — the best in the state for cow operations with over 100 cows, according to the Pennsylvania DHIA.

The farm, co-owned by Bill, Matt, Pat, Kim, Andy, and Dan Itle, and Jan Lidwell, includes 115 head of registered Holsteins and 100 replacements. The operation is free stall with a double-6 parlor (12 units total). The Itles milk the cows twice a day — at 5 a.m. and 4 p.m. — and involve the entire family in the operation.

Valewood Dairy's SCC was brought about by "not any one thing," said Jan Lidwell, who helps with the operation. When the farm was first placed on DHIA, "it didn't seem to pay. We took the cows off one year. But then, when we started seeing a mastitis problem, we went back on the system. "We couldn't operate without our DHIA records at all," she said. Using the DHIA records has helped Valewood identify and control the mastitis problem.

Through a program of individual cow care, and maintaining the cleanliness of the stall, the SCC was lowered. In addition, the farm uses a special post-dip method to control the bacteria count.

By taking time with each cow, and cleaning out the freestall regularly, helped keep the SCC as low as it is. Jan said they are considering using a pre-dip method to see if that may help lower the SCC even further.

Valewood Dairy totals about

500 acres (about 450 tillable). The farm has been in operation since 1933, and the members of the Itle family that now own the farm purchased the operation in 1986.

The Itles grow their own hay and purchase high-moisture corn. The use of a special computer-fed total mixed rations, which they began using in 1983. Two mixes are used,

including a soybean/mineral mix and a rolled corn mix.

Members of the family take turns so everyone gets one weekend off every month, said Jan.

"I really like cows," she said. "Cows are easily domesticated, and they are people animals."

FOCUS

Pennsylvania Dairy Herd Improvement Association

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Milk Cows Competely, Says Farmer, To Improve Production

ANDY ANDREWS
Lancaster Farming Staff
SHARPSVILLE (Mercer Co.) — You have to be careful with automatic milkers — often they don't do their job quite right. In the case of one Mercer County farmer, just standing by and keeping the automatic takeoff on for 15 seconds or more longer — increasing output by 2 to 3 pounds of milk — has increased the rolling herd average by 1,138 pounds. This made the farm number 1 in milk pounds improvement in the Guernsey breed under the Pennsylvania DHIA.

Harold Ealy, of Ealy's Highland Farm, grows his own feed, including a high moisture shelled corn haylage. But feed wasn't necessarily the factor in the increase, including a protein increase by 34 pounds, making it the number 1 improved Guernsey breed by protein in 1990. It was simply milking the cows completely that helped improve the averages.

Harold began farming 35 years ago. He purchased the farm from his father, Randall Ealy, in 1967.

Randall's father purchased the farm in 1898, and it's been in the family for 92 years. Harold farms the 230 acres (200 tillable, 60 acres rented) with help from his son-in-law, Chad Welsch.

Ealy's herd size is 70, which he milks twice a day. There are 10 bred heifer replacements, and 16 with a bull for next fall. He milks out of a milking parlor with a pipeline.

The day begins at 6 a.m., and finishes with the final milking at 6 p.m. The rest of the time is occupied with field work and other farm chores.

"My dad had Guernseys," he said. "My dad and my uncle raised Holsteins and Guernseys. But my father ended up with the Guernseys, and so did I."

Ealy likes the Guernsey breed

because it is a high protein producer and "a real gentle animal, and doesn't eat as much as a Holstein," he said.

Ealy has been with the DHIA since 1969, and believes that there is a lot of work to farming. He believes that cows must be milked out completely in order to improve production — and a farmer must look at each cow separately to determine how that is done.

Farm Calendar

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Thursday, January 3
Bradford Co. Christmas Tree Management Short Course, University Park, thru Jan. 4.
Franklin Co. Dairy Day, Kauffman's Community Center.
Lycoming Co. 1991 area income tax meeting, Comfort Inn, New

Columbia, 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m., thru Jan. 4.

Friday, January 4
Lycoming Co. 1991 area income tax meeting, Comfort Inn, New Columbia, 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m.

Saturday, January 5
Pennsylvania Farm Show, Farm Show Complex, open for judging only.

Sunday, January 6
Pennsylvania Farm Show, Farm Show Complex, Harrisburg, thru Jan. 11.

Monday, January 7
Pennsylvania Farm Show, Farm Show Complex, Harrisburg, thru Jan. 11.

Annual Dairy Industry Conference, Stouffer Dublin Hotel, Dublin, Ohio, thru Jan. 8.

Farm Women Society annual convention, 10 a.m., Farm Women banquet, Penn Harris Motor Inn, 5:30 p.m.

Tuesday, January 8
Pennsylvania Farm Show, Farm Show Complex, Harrisburg, thru Jan. 11.

1991 Eastern Pa. Turf Conference and Trade Show, Valley Forge Convention Center, Sheraton-Valley Forge Hotel, 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m., thru Jan. 11.

Wednesday, January 9
Pennsylvania Farm Show, Farm Show Complex, Harrisburg, thru Jan. 11.

1991 Eastern Pa. Turf Conference and Trade Show, Valley Forge Convention Center, Sheraton-Valley Forge Hotel, 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m., thru Jan. 11.

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