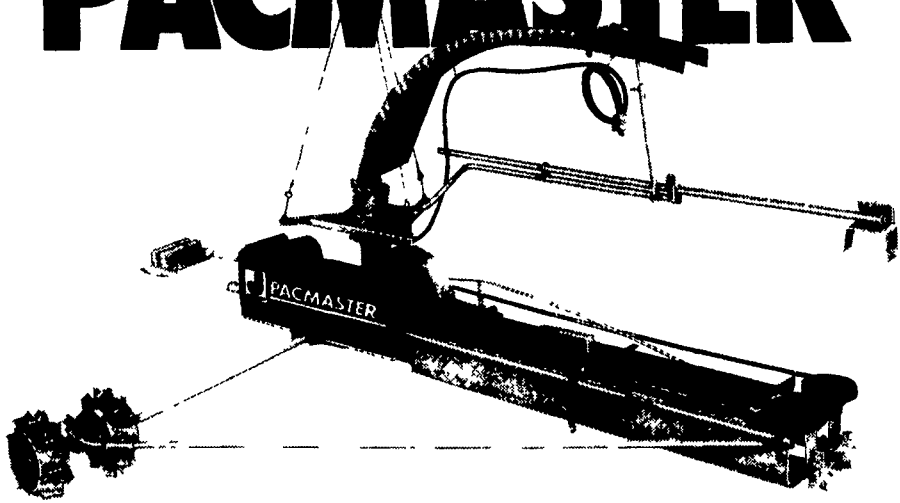


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Wildwood Farm Is Second Best For Mastitis Control

JUDY PATTON

Union Co. Correspondent

At Wildwood Valley Farm in Lewisburg, the Pennsylvania Dairy Herd Improvement Association (Pa.DHIA) mastitis management program is an integral part of the tender loving care given to each cow.

As a result, Steve and Ruth Sanders won second place in Pa.DHIA's first award program for the most improved low somatic cell count in 1991.

Somatic Cell Counts (SCC) are a measure of the quality of the milk and an indication of the health of a milking herd. Infections of the udder raise the number of somatic cells which are released into the milk. The lower the number, the healthier the herd. One cow with a high SCC can raise the count of the entire bulk tank milk, decreasing its value.

Therefore, management techniques which prevent the spread of the various forms of mastitis are useful in creating a profitable dairy.

During the past year, the Sanders had a 35 percent improvement in their average SCC linear score, reaching a score of 2.6. Their herd's average raw county of 74,000 put them in first place in Union County.

In addition to getting more milk from having a low SCC, the Sanders receive a quality milk bonus from their milk cooperative, Dairylea.

At the end of the year, Dairylea Cooperative Inc. sends a bar graph which shows the monthly raw counts and linear scores. At Wildwood Valley Farm, the bar graph reported excellent-range results almost every month.

The Sanders herd has been on the Pa.DHIA mastitis program ever since it started, so Ruth and Steve have monitored their 18 registered Holsteins and two Jersey closely.

During lactation, any cow

whose county goes up is immediately tested by culturing milk samples to determine the cause. The cow is then treated. Cows that chronically have linear scores of 4 or above are culled.

Because the Sanders are "natural" farmers who don't use antibiotics, they are on the "Impro" mastitis program. A month before drying off the cow, they send a culture sample in to the company lab.

When they get their results, they treat with an injection of "Impro," a whey product, into the vein of the tail. The culture and treatment (as required) series is repeated at least twice — two weeks before freshening, and on the day of freshening.

Even in the worst summer heat, the Sanders have maintained a 35,000 SCC. How?

During the summer, the cows are kept in the barn during the day and are left to pasture over night.

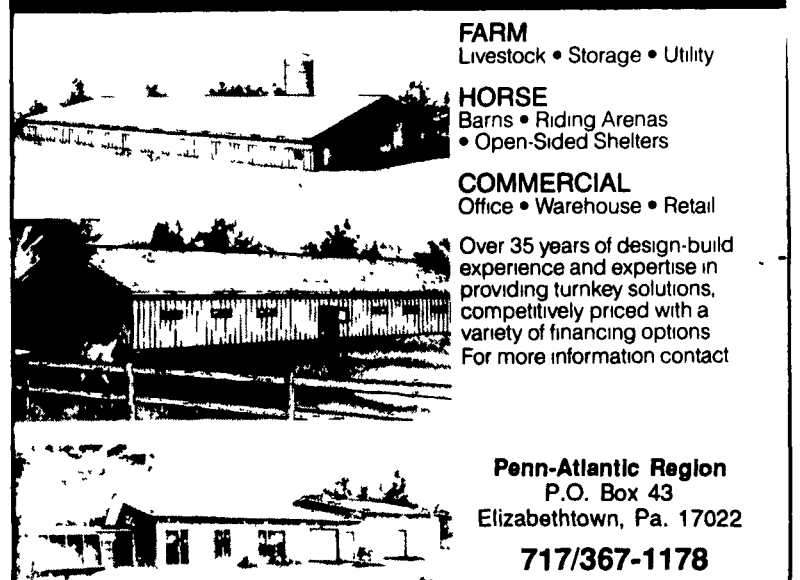
Also, while in the barn, the bedding is either newspaper or straw.

The couple milks three times a day, and Ruth sprays the teats with a Chlorohexadine dip before milking and dries them with a paper towel. After milking, she applies to the teats the same spray, but with glucose added.

The setup in the barn and milkhouse is based on two vacuum pumps — one runs two bucket milkers and the other operates the dumping station. The milking system is sanitized before each milking, and the units are completely taken apart for thorough cleaning every morning. Inflatons are replaced every other month.

The current rolling herd average for the Holstein herd is 20,830 pounds of milk, 813 pounds of fat, and 639 pounds of protein. Ruth and Steve took over the farm six years ago from Ruth's father, Ray Yerger. Ruth's grandfather bought the farm in 1927. The Sanders worked as breeding technicians before farming.

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