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manure in and around the barn, much of which was washing away with surface water. With this type of total confinement system a multitude of herd health problems occurred (ex. diseases of feet and legs and reproductive problems) creating high veterinary costs. A high price was paid in repair and maintenance of equipment for crop farming to feed under this type of dairy production. Worst of all is the price we all pay because fertilizers, insecticides and herbicides contaminate our surface water.

In a grazing system cows are outside in small paddocks for a short time and moved to a different area every 12 hours. Manure is dispersed by the cows themselves over a large area and herd health is greatly improved. Since May 1993 I have had one cow that needed her feet trimmed, all others have had no real feet or leg problems. There have been three cows with retained placentas. No cows have been treated for vaginal infections. Two cows were repeat breeders (more than two services), one of which was sold. There have been four cases of mastitis, three of these cows were sold. Overall cows are very healthy. My veterinary expenses for 1993 were \$450.00, much of which was for two herd pregnancy checks and

4-H cattle health check. Repair and maintenance of equipment for the most part is on milk equipment. Feed costs have been very low from April through November which of course is dependent on the weather and my management of the paddocks. November through March feed costs are high for lactating cows and low for dry cows. The greatest challenge in the grazing system is supplying a consistent lush forage through the changing seasons.

In the spring forage growth is lush. Cattle are moved as quickly as possible over larger areas. As forage growth slows so does the speed at which you move cattle, making your pasture sizes smaller and creating a longer period for regrowth. This works well until July and August when dry weather causes a period of no growth. To solve this problem one could plant barley, wheat or rye with a mixture of clover. When the small grains come off it would leave you a lush pasture to graze on until fall, when your spring pasture would have a lush regrowth. November into winter pasture consists of fifth cutting alfalfa and regrowth of grass hay fields (grass hay mowed mid May and let regrow until late fall — heavy sod). With a little luck and a little prayer this system will supply most of a spring freshening herd's forage.

The problem created by this system is the distance in moving cattle to and from a stationary milking facility. My spring pasture is a mile from my summer.

My winter pasture is three miles from my fall pasture. Thus came the plan for a mobile milking unit.

This system would be powered by a farm tractor and carried on a drop implement trailer, Nine-foot wide by 22-foot long. (See illustration provided). Cows would be moved across the trailer deck into an in-line 8-front exiting stall. The floor or deck of the trailer is a large grate where droppings could fall or be washed through. The ceiling would be painted metal or glass fiberboard which could be easily cleaned. The entire trailer would be under roof. Cows would be milked from the rear and maintained in the stalls by a rear tail board. The front of the stall would open completely for exit. The tail board in the rear would raise up and out taking the milker and the take-off unit completely out of the way for entering cows. Front and rear gates could be air operated. The milk line would be three-inch stainless steel, one piece with no breaks. Milk would be carried with this single line to a vacuum-sealed milk tank. An additional line would be parallel for use in washing. The milk line pitch would be properly set but could be maintained by raising or lowering the front or the back of the trailer (Harford County hills). The milk tank would be small, refrigerated and used only for the temporary storage of milk while milking. A high pressure as well as a low pressure water line could be installed along the milk line with drop hoses for convenient wash-

up of hands, utensils and the trailer itself. A water tank with air pressure would supply the low and high pressure washers. Units on the trailer would consist of the milk tank, compressor, air compressor (power to the stalls, pressure to water tank, milk pump and air reserve) and milk tank. All would be powered by a portable generator on the trailer.

The trailer would be placed between pasture lots and cows would go from one lot through the trailer to be milked and out into the new lot after milking. Milking would not be done in the same area more than once. Grass and seed would be placed under the trailer before milking. Manure and water would ensure a rapid growth of grass at the spot where the trailer had been parked. At the end of milking the trailer would be returned to the dairy where milk would be pumped out of the small tank into the permanent milk tank. The milk line on the trailer would be washed by hookup to the permanent wash system at the dairy. The small milk tank would be washed with a tank washer and drained into the dairy drain field. All paper, tainted milk or trash would be brought back to the dairy for disposal.

The positive aspects of a portable milking unit used in intensive grazing in conjunction with seasonal milking are many. The most important of these being that little if any environmental hazards are

created. No herbicide, insecticide or fertilizer are used. Soil erosion is greatly reduced and manure is not concentrated in a small area but dispersed over a large area.

Herd health is far better. Health experts in this country recommend people eat fresh, green leafy vegetables. Cows would do just that and the farmer would realize improved herd health through this method of feeding. Somatic cell and mastitis decreases and therefore the quality of milk improves as well.

The economic and emotional strain on the small family farm today is overwhelming. Two income families predominate this population just like other occupations. When your children want to go to the movies or the pizza shop and you don't have the money because you spent it on the vet bills or other bills that result from farming in the traditional methods, it is very trying. I know of no business that provides so much raw that simulates the U.S. economy more than the family farm. We spend every penny we make just to stay in business and yet in the past 40 years our market prices have only doubled while other industries have at least quadrupled their market prices.

Last year with intensive grazing milking cheaply bought Jersey heifers, I had money in the bank. I paid cash for ground rent, corn seed, baler twine and all my sup-

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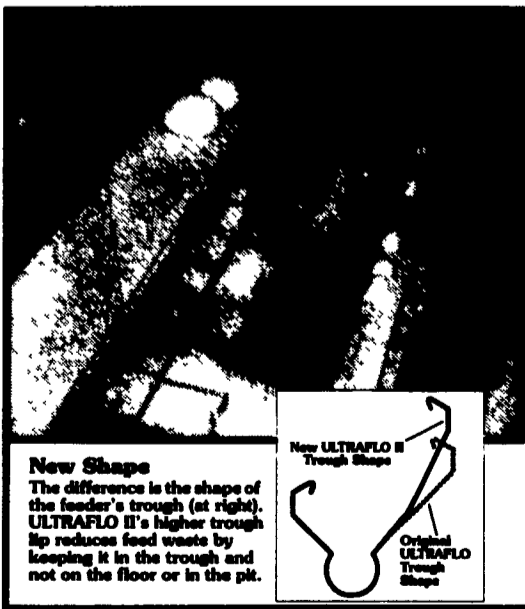
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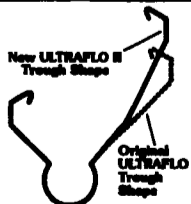
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