

FOCUS

A NEWSLETTER FOR MEMBERS & CUSTOMERS



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Pennsylvania Dairy Herd Improvement Association

DHIA Service Center



Orchard Road, University Park, PA 16802

Lancaster Farming, Pages C6 to C9

December 23, 1995 Issue

Vol. 10 No. 2

MUN Test Provides Basis For Dramatic Milk Production Increase

EVERETT NEWSWANGER
Managing Editor

TUSSEYVILLE (Centre County)—Doug Rimmey thought he was getting about maximum production from his 70 Holstein cows. But last Tuesday, sitting around the farm shop table eating fried eggs and potatoes in the farm equipment and repair shed with his dad Ralph, Doug explained how the use of the new Milk Urea Nitrogen (MUN) test, offered by Pennsylvania DHIA, increased milk production by three pounds per day per cow in less than two weeks.

"As tight as it is in the dairy busi-

ness, I thought that with a herd our size, it would not take too much to recover the price of the MUN test," Doug said. "I didn't think it would be wise for us not to try it. We were getting out of our cows about all we could, but by just adding a pound of protein per cow per day — my, what a difference."

Ralph and Clara Rimmey rented the 100 acre Tussey Ridge homestead that borders Route 322, east of State College in 1956 after Ralph got out of the U.S. Navy. They started with one month's rent paid in advance and \$150 in pocket. In addition to their shoe-string

start, Ralph claims he didn't even know how to run the milking machine.

"You can't start out small today and make it," the elder Rimmey said. "It's a shame."

In 1959 the farm owner gave the Rimmey nine months to round up the money to buy the farm, which they did. And since that time, they have been making a living at farming and building equity in their farm.

About 17 years ago, father and son went into partnership. Doug took over the cows, and Ralph manages the fields. In addition to

the home farm, they rent 130 acres. But the highway that puts development pressure on the farm also makes it rough to get too productive land away from the farm.

"The traffic doesn't like us out there, and we don't like to be on the road with farm equipment either," Doug said.

Since 1988 they have farmed very little grain, using the land to produce forage and pasture for the cows. Both tie stall and a free stall barns are used to house the cows. A TMR mix is used. The ration includes corn silage, oat silage, dry shelled corn, soybean meal, and high moisture corn. Additional feed is top dressed for cows milking over 60 pounds.

Milk production herd averages have been over 20,000 pounds for a number of years, but production seemed to have reached the top level.

"When the first MUN test results came back, I knew very little about the numbers," Doug said. But I saw we were in the recommended range. So, I thought, "Oh, good! At least we know where we stand."

But their feed consultant, Jeff Bogus from the Center Hall Farm Store, had other ideas. The initial MUN test showed the herd was not wasting feed. But at 12.1 points they were at the low end, and Bogus suggested an increase in

protein to see if it made a difference in the tank. It did.

Within two weeks, production increased by three pounds per cow per day. And while the next MUN test came in at 16 points, they were still within the safe range, and the Rimmey had a nice return on their investment in both the MUN test and the extra pound per cow per day of protein they fed the cows. Adjustments are still being made to see if they can fine tune the feeding program even more.

"Hopefully, I will know more in a few months or a year," Doug said. "But what we see is very interesting. We were forage testing and feeding in line with the results of these tests. But with MUN testing you can zero in closer to see where you are overfeeding or underfeeding."

As Doug and his wife Belinda, and their children, Nathan, 17, and Brandi, 13, become the succeeding generations on the Tussey Ridge farm, technology and new ways of doing things make a business of farming unheard 50 years ago. But it's farming as a business that allows the Rimmey family's love of the land and the farmers' way of life to be realized into the future. Put the old loves and the new ways together and you get the true meaning of what it really means to have a "family farm."

Performance Economics Introduced

STATE COLLEGE (Centre Co.)—PA DHIA has developed a Performance Economics Program in association with Dr. Steve Ford, Farm Management Specialist at Penn State, and George Wilcox, Senior Extension Agent, Erie County. Confidentiality and simplicity were our objectives. The program consists of 5 pages of instructions, a one page worksheet, a completed worksheet as a sample and a replica of the PA DHIA Technician's laptop computer feed screen.

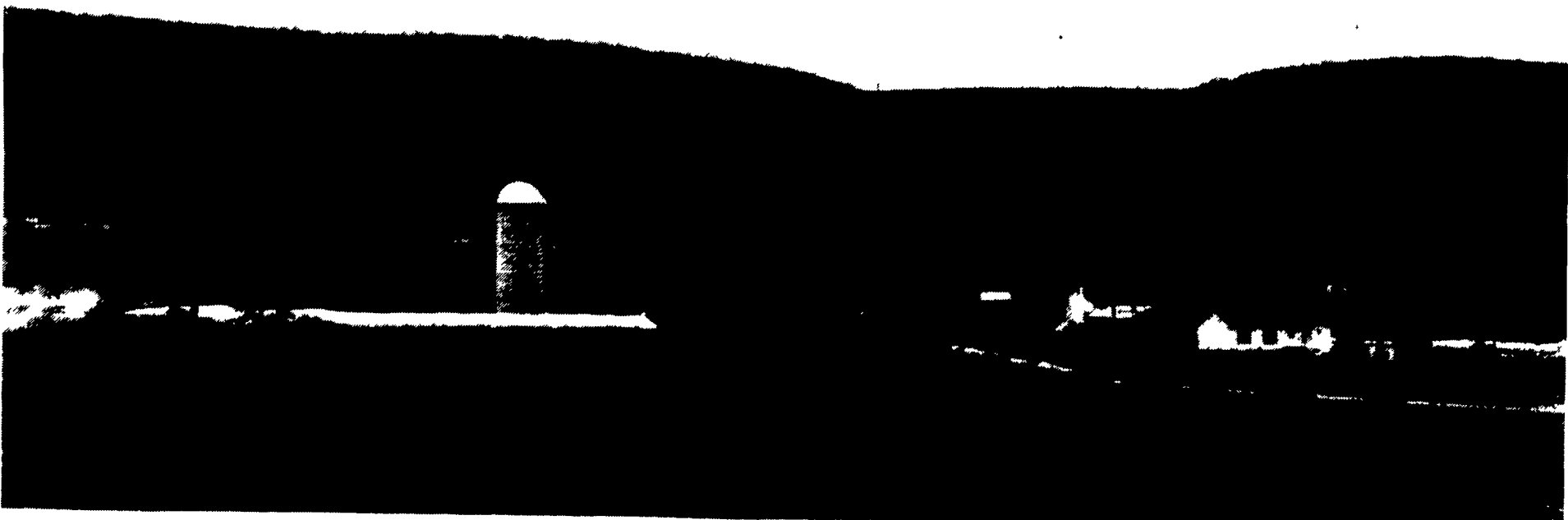
The simple instructions guide our members on a line by line cal-

culatation of the worksheet, which provides cost per cwt. figures on home grown feeds, purchased feeds, and other non-feed items. What are the non-feed items? Basically it is all other expenses in operating your dairy farm including dairy herd cost, heifer cost, and other items like BST.

You start with your 1040F Federal Income Tax form or your budget if you make one. You end with cost per cwt. figures which are reported to your Technician. You report your milk price. You need to get Herd Summary I, PA DHIA will do the rest.

What will you get back? On Herd Summary I: 1) Cost per cwt. to produce milk in a test period. 2) Net farm income per cow on a 12 month basis. 3) Net farm income for herd on 12 month rolling basis. 4) Cost per cow and net income per cow by lactation group. 5) Net income per cow by group and you can create a BST group. 6) Gross income projection and there is more. On the Monthly Lactation Report: 1) Net income per day on each individual cow. 2) Total expense per cow per day. 3) Total

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Fifty years ago, Clara and Ralph Rimmey came to farm these 100 acres along Route 322 east of State College known as Tussey Ridge. Today their

son and daughter-in-law, Doug and Belinda, and grandchildren Nathan, 17, and Brandi, 13, carry the family's love of farming into the future.