

What's Happening On PA Dairy Farms

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WHAT'S HAPPENING ON PENNSYLVANIA DAIRY FARMS? Part II

This month we are presenting information on the technologies being used on Pennsylvania dairy farms. This is the second set of results from a 1997 mail survey by the Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology of Pennsylvania dairy farmers. The 874 dairy farmers responding to the survey averaged 65.3 cows per farm and 17,476 pounds of milk sold per cow.

Each farmer was asked what type of milking system was used on the farm, and if they used automatic takeoffs, TMR, DHIA, bST, personal computers, or

written farm plans. The results indicate a wide variation of herd size and milk production per cow of the farms using individual technologies (Table 1).

Please keep in mind that the use of a certain technology does not necessarily mean greater profitability. More than half (56.5%) of Pennsylvania's dairy farmers use a barn pipeline milking system. The results indicated that 18.3% of the farmers use a milking parlor while 25.1% of the farmers continue to use milker pails. As would be expected, the average herd size on farms using milking parlors is more than 3 times larger than

herd size of farms using milker pails and 2 times larger than the herds size of farms using a barn pipeline. Dairy farms using milking parlors or barn pipelines average more than 1,850 pounds of milk per cow than farms using milker pails. However, there is little difference in milk production per cow between cows milked in milking parlors and cows milked with barn pipelines. In addition, automatic takeoffs are used on 16.2% of the state's dairy farms. These farms tended to have larger herd size and greater milk production per cow.

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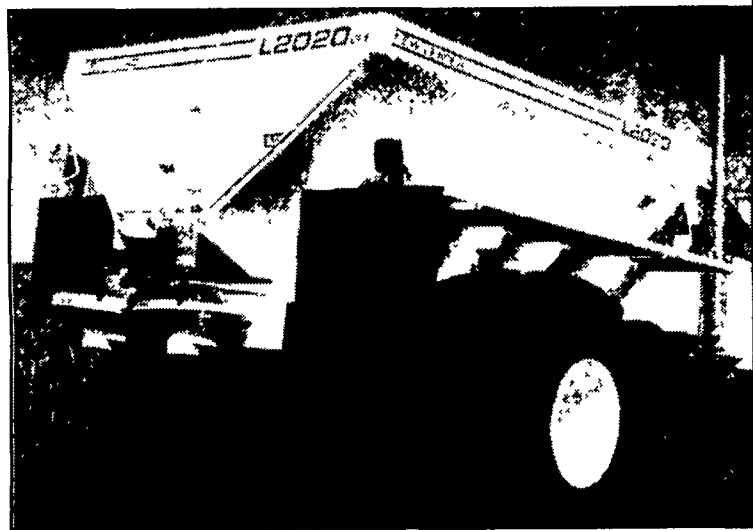
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