

Professional Barn Meeting Held At Kreiders Dairy

MANHEIM (Lancaster Co.) — A professional dairy barn meeting was held Wednesday at the Kreider Dairy Farms, near Manheim, as an educational event designed to show the latest in dairy barn facilities. In addition, industry experts stationed at seven key areas of the dairy operation highlighted important management practices.

With 1,116 stalls in six rows and an 850-foot long feed alley down the center, the new dairy barn at Kreider Farms boasts more than two acres under roof. At 112 feet in width, it's easily wide enough to accommodate an ocean liner.

The openness of the barn contributes a lot to the cow comfort, since lots of fresh air can flow through naturally. But just in case you want a little more of a breeze, you can turn on as many as 116 fans. And there's a misting system too for extra hot days.

The sides of the barn have two sets of curtains. The lower ones are cranked up manually during cool weather; the upper ones are controlled by temperature sensors.

Alley scrapers keep the alleys clean around the clock. Manure drops into a pit at the center of the barn and is pumped from there to one of the old 400-cow free-stall barns that has manure storage underneath it.

When they're eating, the cows stand on rubber belting. When they're resting, they're on mattresses covered with wood shavings.

Triple-H Construction, builders of the new complex, along with Fisher & Thompson, Inc., who put in the parlor, and the Kreider Family and Phil and Julian, have kept efficiency and cow comfort concepts in mind wherever they could. The lighting in the 95,200-square-foot barn, for example, is controlled by sensors as well as timers. "We want to have certain periods of darkness, or at least reduced lighting for the cows at night," P.J. explained.

Even the holding area includes some special considerations. As the cows approach the parlor, for example, a flush system goes into action to clean their feet. And although the capacity of the holding area is 350 cows, they spend less time waiting there than 100 cows did in the old set-up.

A 54-stall Westfalia carousel parlor — the biggest rotary in existence this side of the Mississippi River — is the milking center's

main attraction. Westfalia engineers have audited its performance here at Kreiders' and rated it at 315 cows per hour. "It'll do better than that," P.J. announced confidently. He chose the rotary milking system because cow flow is never a problem, people don't have to keep running from one end of the parlor to the other, as they do with linear parlors, and it's no catastrophe if several units become inoperable for some reason. The next stall will come around within seconds and you just keep going.

Compared to the first rotary parlors, today's parlors are of much stronger construction and the mechanical considerations have been really improved. While the old carousels had steel platforms for the cows to stand on, which ended up rusting, warping and bending, the new platforms are made of concrete that is several inches thick. More rollers are underneath to support the weight — two underneath each stall. They're made of a super tough plastic, as opposed to metal, because they run smoother and quieter. It's estimated that each stall, with cow, weighs about a ton, meaning that the 54-stall parlor and cows weighs approximately 108,000 pounds.

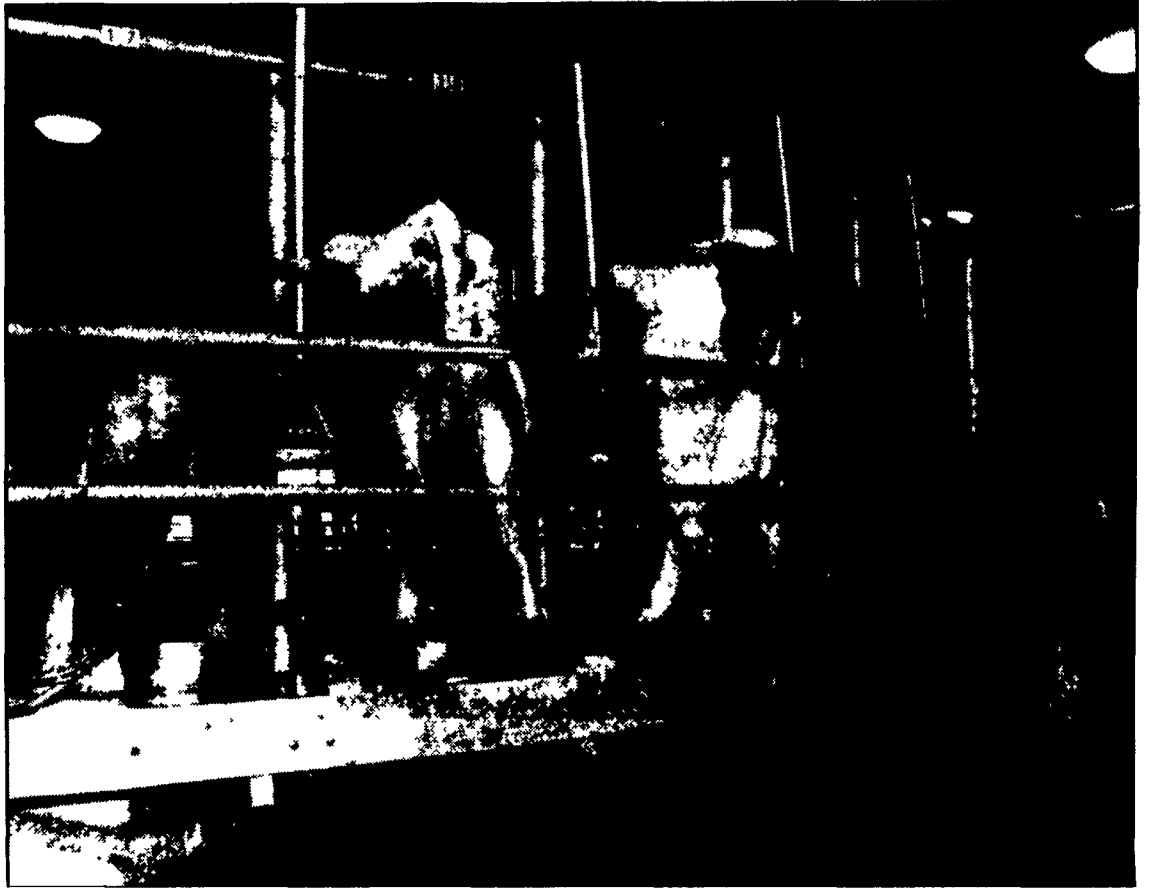
Heavy? Sure. But a one-and-a-half horsepower motor can turn the whole thing with ease.

One revolution of the carousel currently takes eight minutes, during which 54 cows can be milked. But, on average, it takes only five minutes for any of the cows to be milked out. So there's room for cranking up the speed considerably, P.J. explains. It's basically just a matter of cow flow and the labor situation.

A unique feature of this carousel is that a stainless steel water trough is at the head end of every cow. The Kreiders and P.J. thought it would be a good idea to give the cows a chance to drink while they're in the parlor, and they do.

Every cow has a transponder on the left front leg. Aside from automatically identifying her every time she steps onto the carousel, which is three times a day, the transponder will also send an alert of possible health problems or estrus, measuring her activity.

A set of gates in the big barn are of particular interest because they operate at the touch of a button. They are designed to work in all



At Kreider Dairy Farms, Manheim, a dairy seminar on Wednesday, attracted top dairy farmers and industry leaders. Above, these attendees meet early in the day to be assigned to one of seven meeting points around the farm designated as places of interest to learn about the management of large dairy operations. Below, a section of the rotary milking parlor is shown.

directions of a square "interchange," meaning that they close in the (north-south) position, while opening in the (east-west) position. This allows vehicles such as tractors and mixer wagons to pass down through the feed alley without the chance of cows getting out of their housing area.

The cows are offered fresh feed twice a day. The ration currently consists of corn silage, soybean meal, cottonseed, high-moisture ear corn, rye straw, wet brewers' grains, and a mineral blend mix.

Ultimate responsibility of Kreider Farms' overall management falls to Ron Kreider, who is following in the footsteps of his

father, Noah Kreider.

Commercial sponsors of the event included: Aerotech Inc.; Albers Manuf. Co.; Cargill; Bomberger's Store (Tile); J. Steven Burkhardt, Excavator; Emmert Farm Distributing; Fabral; First Union Agri-Finance Department; Fisher & Thompson, Inc.; Genex/CRI; E.H. Gochbauer & Sons, Inc.; Groffdale Concrete Walls, Inc.; C.M. High Company, Inc.;

Hoffman Seeds, Inc.; Keystone Concrete Products, Inc.; Lancaster Veterinary Associates; Lapp's Barn Equipment; McNess; Mid-Atlantic Agri-Systems; Monsanto Dairy Business; Park Myers Dairy Cows; Norbco, Inc.; Northbrook Farms, Inc.; Penn State Coop. Extension; Purina Mills; Rigidply Rafters, Inc.; Rohrer's Quarry, Inc.; Shank Door Company; and Triple H Construction.

Growing Your Dairy Facility

EBENSBURG (Cambria Co.) — Penn State Cooperative Extension, in collaboration with dairy industry leaders, will be conducting a dairy producers'

workshop titled: "Growing Your Dairy - Facility and Financial Planning for the 21st Century" on Tuesday, Nov. 9.

The program will be held at the Holiday Inn in Altoona. Registration will begin at 9 a.m. The program which includes lunch, will begin at 10 a.m. and conclude around 5:30 p.m. Deadline to register is Nov. 1.

To register, mail a \$35 check payable to Extension Special Account to: Huntingdon County Cooperative Extension, R. 4 Box 167B6, Fairgrounds Road, Huntingdon, PA 16652, or call your local Penn State Cooperative Extension Office for more details.

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