

# Beginning Grazier's School

(Continued from Page 6)

The gate helps move cows into a swing, double-16, herringbone parlor, open on both sides. The sliding doors can be closed in the wintertime, where the floor is heated from a forced-water, oil-charged heating system.

Thirty-two cows can be milked at a time, Moyer noted. It takes about 50 minutes to milk 107 cows. The total cost of the Grade A sliding door parlor system — including the feed pad, manure management system, equipment, and parlor — was \$213,000, Moyer noted. Some work was done by the Moyer family and employees. Construction began in August 1997 and the first cows arrived in the facility in March 1998.

Milk is moved to a 1,500-gallon tank. Moyer sells milk to the Maryland-Virginia Milk Producers Cooperative.

Moyer uses the facilities to ensure the cows stay clean.

"If you keep a clean cow, from start to finish, preparation is minimal," he said.

Also, with the sliding doors, the temperature can be about 10-15 degrees cooler inside than outside during the summer.

In the pasture area, an extensive drain tile system manages water flow. Surface water is tested regularly by the USDA-ARS. About 200 acres are in pasture. The rotationally grazed areas measure 5-10 acres apiece, subdivided into paddocks.

The pastures — composed of a variety of grasses including fescue, timothy, orchardgrass, reed canarygrass, and some clovers — are enclosed with 16-gauge high-tensile fence. The paddocks are divided by six-strand polywire supported by 5/8-inch fiberglass corner posts and 3/8-inch fiberglass spacers.

A crossing over the Little Cove Creek was constructed in April. The bridge is made of Virginia pine and maple at a cost of \$25,000. The creek crossing is made of a geoweb plastic cell system, Petrucci noted. The system can be moved so cows can graze as near to the creek as the creek crossing is made of a geoweb plastic cell system, Petrucci noted. The system can be moved so cows can graze as near to the creek as the producer chooses.

Water is supplied to each paddock through 160 psi black water lines running on top of the ground.

Moyer is originally from Somerset County (which he claims have milder summers). Moyer, who has been operating the AFT farm since early 1997, has a 12-hour rotation on the paddocks.

"The key to rotational grazing is to give the cows fresh grass and to keep things as vegetative as possible," said Petrucci. At the summit, Petrucci noted that more legumes should be applied.



Bryan T. Petrucci, center, urged those who attended the grazing school to "consider adapting a grazing-based system as an alternative to high-capital farming," he said at the start of the school. From left is Kurt Achenbach, farm employee. At right is Glenn Moyer, farm operator.

Nate Leonard, grazing consultant from Pastures Unlimited, Little York, N.Y., said that he would "like to see about 30 percent clover in here with the orchardgrass," pointing to the benefits of ladino or white clover as an additive to the pastures,

at the summit.

Leonard spoke about the benefits of frost seeding clover. In New York, frost-seeded clover took well but the state experienced a dry spring. Consequently, "not much took," he said.

(Turn to Page 10)

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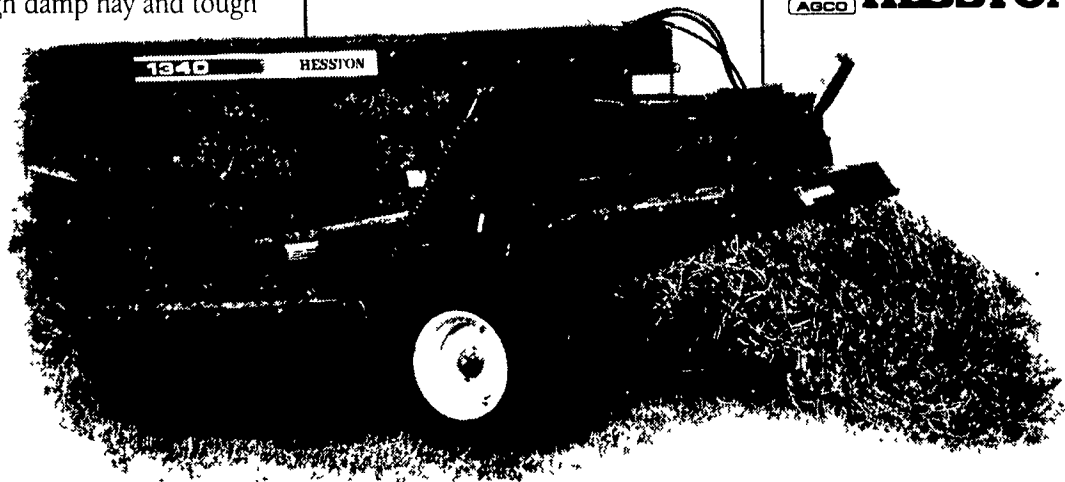
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