

'PARTICULAR' DAIRY PRODUCERS SATISFIED By PURINA PROGRAM

At High Hart Farm in Sullivan County, the farmer and son team of Bill and Jeff Hart along with herdsman Mike Bedford put a lot of thought and effort into keeping the 250-cow Holstein herd healthy and productive.

Besides employing good management practices such as fan and water-droplet systems for cooling the animals, pasturing the cows on a seasonal basis, and hiring the regular services of an excellent hoof trimmer, the Harts rely on a Purina feeding program.

"We're fussy here," Jeff Hart said of the High Hart approach to dairying.

The farm has been in the Hart family since the mid 1800s, said father Bill Hart. He remembers his own father using Purina feeds "when I was a kid" for the small dairy herd they kept on the farm.

Bill points to the high level of attention given to the feeding program by Purina representative Josh Harvatine as a major reason for its success.



Herdsman and recordkeeper Mike Bedford showing off production records for the milking cows on High Hart Farm.

Harvatine visits the farm once a week to test the moisture content of the corn, alfalfa, and grass forages the Harts grow on about 600 acres. Along with regular protein testing, he uses the information to balance the rations for high and low production groups and the dry cow group.

Replacement calves and heifers are also grown on a Purina program.

The dry cows need special attention, Harvatine said. Since dry matter consumption decreases to about half the level of cows in production, it is an extra challenge to make sure they are getting all the nutrients they need.

"I keep a really close eye on the dry cows," he said.

For the TMR fed to cows in production, Purina provides a custom concentrate tailored to the types of forages grown in the area.

Herdsman Mike Bedford pointed out a daily average of 75 pounds per milking cow for the month of July. The herd is milked twice a day, without the use of any growth hormones.

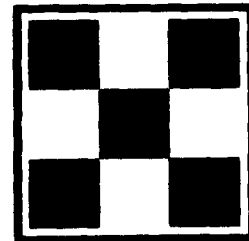
With about 1.2 million pounds of milk produced annually for each fulltime man on the farm, the Hart's operation is running at a high rate of efficiency, Harvatine said.

A big part of what makes the Purina program so successful is that it helps keep the cows healthy and problem-free, Bill Hart said. He noted that milk fever and twisted stomachs are rare events on High Hart farm.

"Josh is a good feed man," Bill concluded. "He's better than a vet."



The team at High Hart Farm near Forksville in Sullivan County, from left, Purina representative Josh Harvatine, Bill Hart, herdsman Mike Bedford, and Jeff Hart. "We're fussy here," Jeff said.



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