



FOCUS ON DAIRY

Penn State Cooperative Extension Capitol Region Dairy Team

ARE YOUR TIESTALLS 'WORKING' FOR YOU?

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Are your cows confined to ties-talls? If so, do they struggle to rise or recline? Do they spend more time standing than they should? Do you lose first lactation cows because they don't adapt? Are stall-related injuries, such as swollen hocks, tramped teats, and/or bruises, common?

Proper dimensions, stall structure, stall bed, bedding, and management are all essential to successful stall performance. Producers that have modified their tiestalls to improve cow comfort and access to feed and water have been pleased with the results. This article will focus on the current recommendations of dimensions and structure of tiestalls for improved cow comfort and access to feed and water.

The stall design should allow each cow to rise and recline easily without contact to the surrounding structure. There should also be ample room for her to rest comfortably. For mature Holstein cows, the stall bed length (measured cow side of the front curb to the manure gutter) should be 68-70 inches. This allows ample body space (brisket to tail) for the cows to rest comfortably.

Stall length may be reduced 2-6 inches for smaller framed cows. Preferred stall divider placement is from 51-54 inches center to center, or approximately 49 to 52 inches clear, for most mature Holsteins. Stall width may be reduced 2-4 inches for smaller framed cows.

The most popular tiestall design uses a horizontal tie rail at the front of the stall to anchor the chain. Usually this rail is 30 to 36 inches from the stall surface and it extends up to 8 inches forward from the centerline of the front curb. This placement may cause some difficulty for large cows to rise and recline, but more often interferes with feed and water access. Raising the tie rail 8-12 inches (40-46 inches above the stall bed) can greatly improve access to the feed table and water bowl. Modifying existing stalls typically requires welding or clamping additional tubing to the divider.

Note that the tie chain length must also be increased when the tie rail is raised. The tie chain should allow the cows to lunge forward to rise and recline. Some producers shorten tie chains to control cow movement. Short tie chains can limit the lunging movement, making it more difficult for the cows to rise, causing them to struggle or get up front first. Most producers prefer tie chains anchored to the horizontal rail since access is more convenient when tethering cows than those anchored to the curb. Required tie chain length varies with the placement of the tie rail. One guideline is that the chain (including snap) should hang 8-10 inches from the stall bed.

The front curb of a stall should not restrict the cow's lunging



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ability. Recommended height is 9 inches from the resting surface. If a soft mat or rubber-filled mattress is used, be sure to allow additional depth from the top of the curb to the concrete stall base for this thickness. The cow side of the front curb should be beveled or rounded to reduce the chance of injury.

The feed table should be 2-4 inches above the resting surface. This allows for a more natural "head-down" eating posture. In some cases, after mattresses are added to the stall surface, the eating surface is below the stall surface, making it difficult for the cows to eat, often requiring them to lower themselves to their front knees.

The stall structure should not interfere with feed and water access. Often the tie rail position and the divider can restrict cows from reaching all the feed and limits access to the water bowl. Typically, raising the tie rail and/or moving it forward will improve access to both feed and water. In many cases, lowering the water bowl may allow the cows to more conveniently reach into the water bowl. Easier cow access can also reduce the splashing. In cases where structure modification doesn't improve drinking water access, a water bowl for each stall, mounted for convenient access, may be required.

Modifying the stall dividers to improve cow comfort and allow better access to feed and water can lead to improved stall acceptance, longevity, and production. How do your stalls measure up?

A meeting on designing and managing tiestall barns is scheduled from 10 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 8 at the Lancaster Farm and Home Center in Lancaster. For more information, call (717) 394-6851.

New Subscribers Are Winners At N.J. Vegetable Show

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. — Lancaster Farming has announced that the five winners of the free one-year subscription contest from the New Jersey Annual Vegetable Meeting are all new subscribers.

National Convention Takes Center Stage At NJH-FA Meeting

ANDY ANDREWS
Editor

RINGOES, N.J. — National Holstein Convention planning took center stage in business matters at the annual meeting of the New Jersey Holstein-Friesian Association (NJH-FA) here last Saturday at the Amwell Valley Fire House.

More than 70 members were on hand for the banquet meeting.

The association boasts about 200 members statewide, including about 120 active and 104 juniors.

Several other items also took the limelight at the meeting.

Richard Norz Jr. discussed the 2001 state sale, which included some nice consignments. Sale date this year is April 20 at 11 a.m. at the Warren County Fairgrounds.

Last year's show was conducted in August with 150 head at the Salem County Fairgrounds, with judge Chris Hall. This year's show is on Wednesday, Aug. 21, at the Sussex County Fairgrounds. Judge is Gary Culbertson, Richfield Springs, N.Y.

Member Ken Roberts advertised the annual golf outing, scheduled June 25 at 8 a.m. at the Avalon Golf Course south of Atlantic City, with a cost of \$75 per player. Businesses or individuals can buy sponsor signs for \$100 a piece.

Genie Roberts presented a healthy treasurer's report. Bill Teets provided a finance report.

Plans are under way to place a

Dairy Risk Management Meetings Scheduled

UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.) — Dairy farmers can learn methods to control financial risk caused by volatile milk prices at training sessions being offered by Penn State in counties throughout the area.

Ken Bailey and Sarah Roth of Penn State's dairy departments will present the basics of forward contracting and business strategies at the meetings.

Understanding your milk check, computing your basis, incorporating risk management into your business plan, strategy/market outlook, and the basics of forward contracting are topics dairy producers will have a chance to learn.

Meeting dates and locations by county are:

•Bradford/Susquehanna, Jan. 28

•Tioga, Jan. 29

•Centre, Feb. 19

•Potter, Feb. 20

•Erie/Mercer/Crawford, Feb. 21

•Southeast region, Feb. 27
Meetings begin at 9:30 a.m. and will end before 4 p.m.

Dairy producers are encouraged to bring their 2001 monthly milk checks, a calculator, and pen or pencil.

Registration is \$10. Contact your local extension office for more details.

history of New Jersey breeder breakthroughs and events in the national convention Souvenir booklet. The National Holstein Convention is scheduled Sunday, June 23-Thursday, June 27 at the Taj Mahal Hotel and Casino in Atlantic City.

Joe Valen, national convention chairman, noted that the planning committee is scheduled to meet every month from "now to the convention," he said, to iron out plans and update the state association on progress. Valen noted that volunteers are needed and that many more agri-industry representatives, including boards of ag, "friends and workers" can become involved in this historical event.

Valen noted the importance of working as a group and representing the state industry at the tours to show how far-reaching New Jersey agriculture has become. In a letter of August last year, Valen noted that "while we strive to improve the genetic ability of Holstein cattle to improve profit, we recognize that the strength of our organization, and indeed the future of the dairy industry, lies in the educational programs and services that we provide for our youth. Therefore,

most of our time, effort, and other resources are directed to youth programs."

The national convention is a "privilege afforded to a given state organization only about every 25 years," he noted in the letter.

Valen noted that in his speech last year in Cedar Rapids, at the national convention, "Our hotel, the Taj Mahal, is a fantasyland jewel in the city of jewels," he said. "Opportunities available to visitors in New Jersey are almost too numerous to mention. Canoeing the 1.1 million-acre Pine-lands Nature Preserve, or the scenic Delaware Water Gap, or hiking the trails in our state forests will expose you to the natural beauty of our state."

For more information, contact Valen at (609) 896-1237 or (732) 568-0219.

NJH-FA President Richard Byrna noted that "we need to pitch in and work together" to make the national convention successful.

Elected unanimously to serve individual three-year terms were Warren Baldwin, north Jersey region; Bernie Beatty, central Jersey; and Raymond Hackett Jr., south Jersey.

2002 PENNSYLVANIA HOLSTEIN ASSOCIATION CALENDAR OF EVENTS

JANUARY 31	11 00 A M SOUTH-CENTRAL SHOW & SALE MEETING OLD COUNTRY BUFFET, HARRISBURG, PA
FEBRUARY 2	7 30 P M BEAVER/LAWRENCE COUNTY ANNUAL MEETING HOLIDAY INN, BEAVER FALLS, PA
FEBRUARY 8-10	PENNSYLVANIA JUNIOR HOLSTEIN CONVENTION RAMADA INN, ALTOONA, PA
FEBRUARY 28-MARCH 2	PENNSYLVANIA HOLSTEIN CONVENTION RAMADA INN & BLAIR COUNTY CONVENTION CENTER, ALTOONA, PA
MARCH 1	PA HOLSTEIN ASSOCIATION 89 TH ANNUAL MEETING BLAIR COUNTY CONVENTION CENTER, ALTOONA, PA
MARCH 1	7 00 P M PA HOLSTEIN CONVENTION SALE BLAIR COUNTY CONVENTION CENTER, ALTOONA, PA
MARCH 5	7 00 P M BEDFORD COUNTY ANNUAL MEETING NORTHERN BEDFORD HIGH SCHOOL, LOYSBURG, PA
MARCH 7	7 00 P M PERRY COUNTY ANNUAL MEETING MESSIAH LUTHERN CHURCH
MARCH 15	7 00 P M SNYDER COUNTY ANNUAL MEETING MIDDLEBURG FIREHALL, MIDDLEBURG, PA
MARCH 15	7 00 P M SOMERSET COUNTY ANNUAL MEETING BERLIN COMMUNITY BUILDING, BERLIN, PA
MARCH 18	7 00 P M BLAIR COUNTY ANNUAL MEETING WILLIAMSBURG ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, WILLIAMSBURG
MARCH 29	9 30 A M PA HOLSTEIN SPRING SHOW FARM SHOW BUILDING, HARRISBURG, PA
APRIL 5	7 00 P M SUSQUEHANNA COUNTY HOLSTEIN CLUB SALE HAROLD HARTT FARM, SUSQUEHANNA, PA
APRIL 12	7 00 P M WESTERN PA SPRING SPECTACULAR SALE MERCER COUNTY 4-H PARK, MERCER, PA
APRIL 19	7 00 P M SOUTHWEST SENSATION SALE FAYETTE COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS, UNIONTOWN, PA
JUNE 25-28	NATIONAL HOLSTEIN CONVENTION TRUMP TAJ MAHAL, ATLANTIC CITY, NJ
JULY 27	10 00 A M SOUTHWEST CHAMPIONSHIP SHOW FAYETTE COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS, UNIONTOWN, PA
AUGUST 3	9 30 A M NORTHWEST CHAMPIONSHIP SHOW STONEBORO FAIRGROUNDS, STONEBORO, PA
AUGUST 17	11 30 A M WARREN COUNTY HOLSTEIN SALE FAIRGROUNDS, PITTSFIELD, PA
AUGUST 17	6 00 P M CENTRAL CHAMPIONSHIP SHOW HUNTINGDON COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS, HUNTINGDON, PA
AUGUST 20	10 00 A M NORTHEAST CHAMPIONSHIP SHOW ALPION PARK, TROY, PA
SEPTEMBER 24	9 00 A M PA HOLSTEIN FALL CHAMPIONSHIP SHOW FARM SHOW BUILDING, HARRISBURG, PA
SEPTEMBER 25	7 00 P M EASTERN ELITE HOLSTEIN SALE FARM SHOW BUILDING, HARRISBURG, PA
SEPTEMBER 26	8 00 A M EASTERN NATIONAL HOLSTEIN SHOW FARM SHOW BUILDING, HARRISBURG, PA
NOVEMBER 16	11 00 A M NITTANY LION FALL CLASSIC SALE AG ARENA, STATE COLLEGE, PA

Winners of the one-year free subscriptions are Nelson Hure, New Egypt, N.J.; Ed Cuneo, Berlin, N.J.; Richard Blew, Bridgeton, N.J.; George Melick, Oldwick, N.J.; and Carl Auwarter, Tansboro, N.J.

Congratulations everyone!