Cattle corner

K. Needham

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MILKING MACHINE MAINTENANCE

Probably the hardest worked piece of equipment on the dairy farm—the one which is expected never to let you down—and yet gets the least maintenance is your milking machine.

Although our machine testing service has only been operating for a relatively short period, results and experience to date show only too well that the average machine receives too little regular attention. Now, with the greater part of the herd dried off is the time to give your machine a thorough overhaul. Here are a few major points to check:

- Pump speed.
- Belt tightness.
- Inflations.
- Claw air inlets.
- Releaser flaps.
- Pulsators.
- Relief valves.
- Vacuum gauges.

Speaking of relief valves, these are temperamental and if not functioning correctly can cause trouble.

Too little air can cause a high vacuum, teat cup crawl and damage to the udder, leading to mastitis. It would be worthwhile thinking of fitting a Ruakura-type weighted relief valve which is positive and cannot go wrong.

It is impossible to overestimate the importance of a properly running machine—it will save man-hours in the shed and help increase production. Remember that contended cows milk well and produce more.

A NEW YEAR FOR GRADE HERD RECORDING

March 1 ushers in the new year for Grade Herd Recording and with it a new scale of fees. These have been designed to encourage greater continuity of testing and to more equitably spread the financial burden which has resulted from increased costs of maintaining the service. The new scale to apply is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Herds tested</th>
<th>Per Cow.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>for 1 to 3 years</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for 4 to 6 years</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for 7 or more years</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It will be observed from this scale of fees that consideration has been given to continuity of testing. Those persons who have been testing for seven or more years have received acknowledgment to the extent that they may avail themselves of this service at the lowest rate applicable.

To enable us to arrange a smoother changeover and to organise our units as economically as possible all persons interested in testing are requested to complete their application forms immediately and forward them together with the fee to the District Officer, the Herd Recorder or Head Office. Your assistance and cooperation will be appreciated.

Calf Paddocks

With the new season’s calf crop not too far away it is time to be planning adequate calf paddocks. One paddock near the dairy is not enough. Calves like fresh young leafy pasture and should be given every opportunity to graze from an early age.

To provide young pasture regularly, try using four calf paddocks which can be rotated at three-weekly intervals.

In addition, rotation of calf paddocks provides excellent insurance against worm infestation and if this procedure is followed regularly it will be found that the incidence of worms is rare.
After weaning the calves should not be confined to their paddocks, but should be allowed to graze ahead of the milking cows in the normal rotational pasture programme.

**BUY BULLS FROM TESTED DAMS**

Too many farmers are buying bulls on too little information. The appearance of a bull is important to demonstrate his health and constitution. Proved bulls are best, but, where these are not available, some knowledge of the butterfat backing of his dam, his sisters and his daughters is imperative if you hope to improve the production of your herd.

Admittedly it is difficult to buy bulls from tested dams which have passed standard. They are not readily available, but the sooner the demand for them increases, the sooner will pure-bred breeders endeavour to meet these demands.

The process of grading up is a slow and expensive one and allows no scope for guessing. Those who are contemplating replacing their bull should make every effort to obtain one from a tested dam which has passed standard.

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