Control of lice on cattle

Department of Agriculture, Western Australia
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Erratum
Article found at end of 'The importance of rapid and complete milking' K Needham
ON THE DAIRY FARM

THE IMPORTANCE OF RAPID AND COMPLETE MILKING

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COMPLETE withdrawal of milk from the udder as quickly as possible after the process of "let-down" has started, is an essential in good milking management.

This is usually related to many aspects of good shed husbandry and also to maintaining legal standards of butterfat and solids-not-fat in the milk supply.

To achieve this the milking machine must be functioning efficiently.

Survey

During a survey of the composition of milk, a limited number of samples were examined to show the variations in composition of fore, mid or normal milk, and stripping milk.

Fig. 1.—The average of 19 morning samples. The average weight of milk produced was 16.3 lb.

Fig. 2.—The average of 19 afternoon samples. The average weight of milk produced was 14.4 lb.
Samples were taken periodically from daily morning and afternoon milkings over five months.

The average percentage of butterfat, S.N.F. and total solids in the fore, mid and stripping milk is shown in the graphs and tables.

**AVERAGE PERCENTAGE COMPOSITION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Butterfat</th>
<th>S.N.F.</th>
<th>Total Solids</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fore</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>8.83</td>
<td>10.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>8.84</td>
<td>12.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stripping</td>
<td>9.93</td>
<td>8.11</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note the difference in percentage butterfat, S.N.F. and total solids between the three phases of milking.

These figures indicate that failure to milk quickly and completely can be a cause of milk having a low compositional level.

**MILKING MACHINE MAINTENANCE**

The seasonal flush is approaching and it is most important that milking machines be operating as efficiently as possible.

Farmers are unable to carry out full scale efficiency checks on their own machines as this requires special equipment and a trained operator. There is however much the farmer can do to keep the machine in satisfactory running order.

The general tendency, especially in seasonal districts where milk is produced for manufacturing purposes is for farmers to put their machines in reasonably good order at the start of the season and give them little or no attention until the next season.

To get the best results from the cows, the milking machine must work at its maximum efficiency throughout the whole of the season.

Rubberware, particularly the inflations are subject to wear and perishing. Often a new set of inflations is installed at the start of the season and by the time the flush period is reached in the spring they are stretched, cracked and lifeless. With only a few months left before the cows are dried off there is a reluctance to change them. This is a false economy, for it is at this time when production is at its peak that the milking machine must be operating most efficiently.

Improved milking machine efficiency helps to guard against mastitis and it may well also prolong the lactation period.

**CONTROL OF LICE ON CATTLE**

The external parasites, biting and sucking lice (particularly of calves) are the cause of much unthriftiness.

The spring heralds warmer weather and it is also a time to examine cattle for the presence of these parasites.

A rapid and severe build up may occur, especially where calves are confined for feeding in yards or sheds used before and not rested.

Infested animals are restless, flick their tails and kick constantly. Invariably the skin around the neck and shoulders is laid bare by constant rubbing against objects to relieve the irritation.

The parasites are blood suckers and in bad cases may actually produce the symptoms of malnutrition in otherwise well fed animals. Growth is retarded and death can occur as a result of lowered resistance to more serious disease.

Parasites affect a loss of condition in milking cows with a subsequent drop in production.

Regular inspection of the animals should be made for the presence of the parasites.

Dipping or preferably spraying with an organic phosphorus compound in accordance with the manufacturers' directions will eradicate the lice. Two treatments 14 days apart are necessary for complete eradication.