

They Milk Their Cows Every 10 Hours

A Wisconsin dairy family boosted milk production and increased quality by switching from twice-a-day milking to an every 10 hour schedule, according to a recent report Carole Curtis in the Wisconsin State Farmer.

Myron Mueller, Meeme, Wis., wanted to reduce udder strain on his high-producing herd of 55 Holsteins but didn't want to switch to a 3-a-day schedule of every 8 hr. milking. He decided to try a 10-hr. schedule after reading about a California farmer who had made it work.

At first Myron and his wife Marlene were overwhelmed by the daily variation of schedule but they say once they put it on the calendar, they quickly adapted and came to appreciate the advantages of the system.

Production jumped from 23,000 lbs. of milk to 24,000 lbs. and somatic cell count dropped from 180,000 to less than 90,000, a level that earns quality milk premiums. Mueller says udders are much healthier

now that the stress is no longer there to hold so much milk.

The schedule runs on a 5-day rotation. For example: on the first day, the Muellers milk at 6 a.m. and 4 p.m. The second day, 2 a.m., 12 noon and 10 p.m., followed by 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. the third day, etc.

Although opposed to the time switch at first, Marlene says she now enjoys being able to eat a leisurely supper most evenings and not having to rush out to milk. "It feels like we have more time than ever before," she says.

Since Myron's brother Mike came back to the farm to work, they have a milking crew of three which means one person is free at each milking, making the heavier schedule more comfortable. Every three nights, someone has off so they can sleep through the night.

Mueller has kept feeding schedules the same, although he gives a more bountiful ration since the schedule switch.

Homemade Transit Level

By Heather Smith Thomas

My husband Lynn came up with a nifty homemade transit level for digging an irrigation ditch on grade, helping us avoid the expense of having the project surveyed.

We had to run a new ditch to one of our hayfields but we had to go around a mountain and stay above a nearby swamp. The ditch had to run fairly level with very little fall. If we had any low spots, water would back up and wash out the ditch. My husband decided to "sight it in" with his carpenter's level, using flagged stakes to mark the line where he should put the ditch.

He attached his level to one of the stakes, which were all the same height. We put the stakes 50 ft. apart. Since the level was 2 in. thick, and he was sighting across the top of it, that made his "transit" 2 in. higher than the stake he was sighting in. So by working uphill, this meant that the stake he was sighting in would be about 2 in. higher than the one we were sighting from. He allowed a little bit extra so we had roughly 3 in. of fall in every 50 ft. of ditch.



Lynn would sight in where the next stake should be, with our son moving the stake around until it was in just the right place, while I read the level to tell my husband when it was perfectly level as he sighted along the top. My husband made the first cut with his TD-14 crawler and then finished the ditch with a tractor and blade. It was on perfect grade and water ran through it beautifully.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Heather Smith Thomas, Box 215, Salmon, Idaho 83467 (ph 208 756-2841).

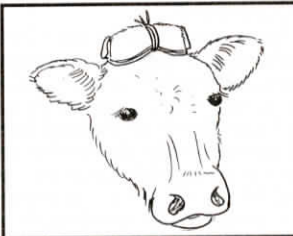
Dehorning Tourniquet

By Heather Smith Thomas

When dehorning a mature cow or any steer or heifer that has fairly large horns, the big arteries in the horn stubs can bleed profusely, squirting blood for a long time. The animal may become weak from loss of blood or, under certain circumstances, even bleed to death. There are a number of ways to stop the bleeding including searing the horn stubs with a hot iron, but this can make them slower to heal.

We've discovered a method that stops the bleeding and causes the least trauma to the animal. We put pressure on those main arteries by tying a string tightly around the animal's poll. You simply leave small "lips" of horn stump when you saw the horns off so the string will fit under them. Then it can't be pulled or rubbed off.

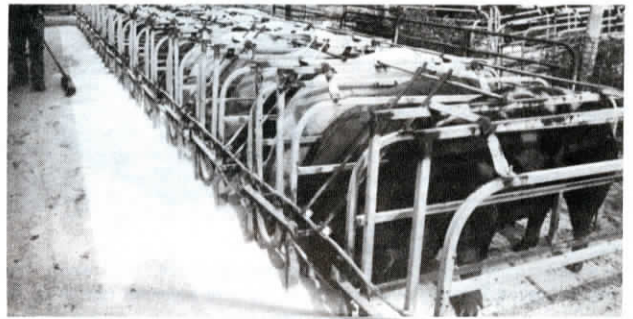
Plastic baling twine works fine for this "tourniquet". You wrap it fairly tightly around the poll, and then snug it up tightly



by running a string over the top of the poll and under the twine front and back, cinching it up tightly. This completely shuts off those big arteries under the horn stump that feed the horn.

After a few days when the stumps begin to heal we run the animals back through a chute to cut the twine off.

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Second Life For Old Farrowing Crates

Need to replace your farrowing crates but hate the thought of just throwing the old ones out? Well don't. Rick Pellet of Atlantic, Iowa, used his old farrowing crates to create feeding stalls for his gestating sows.

Pellet keeps his 120-sow herd outside during gestation. He had been feeding sows in groups on a concrete pad. After replacing some of his farrowing crates, Pellet took the old ones, lined them up on

the concrete and welded them together.

Now, when the sows come up to eat, they file into the separate stalls. "It's reduced the fighting and bullying that went on before," he says. And it cost virtually nothing.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Rick Pellet, RR, Atlantic, Iowa 50022 (ph 712 243-4648). (Reprinted with permission from Pork '91. Story and photo by Marlys Miller)

New "Rent-A-Hen" Service

A German chicken farmer is doing a booming business renting layer hens to city folk, according to an article in the British farm magazine, Farmers Weekly.

Johann Hillerns, who farms in East Friesland, raises "free-range" chickens, which means they're out on pasture rather than in cages. That means he can charge a premium for his eggs. He hit on the idea of leasing individual chickens to consumers as a way of getting people out to the farm and boosting egg prices even more.

After just three weeks he had already leased out 100 chickens and orders were pouring in for more, including requests to give chicken leases as birthday gifts.

The hen rental charge is about \$50 a year, which works out to about 17 cents an egg (figuring a yield of about 300 eggs

per year). Once leased, the customer gets a certificate and coupons for 300 eggs, which can be collected through the year at the farm or at Hillerns' egg store. The hen is fitted with a leg ring with a number indicating to whom she has been rented.

"People are coming from over 60 miles to view the hens and choose a personal layer," says Hillerns, noting that since these long-distance hen-renters can't always collect their eggs in person, they can choose to have them special-delivered every two weeks.

After a year, the hen-renters can claim their birds to take home for slaughter, or they can pay Hillerns a "pension fee" and he'll put them out on grass for the rest of their lives. Most customers choose to leave the birds in Hillerns "hen hotel".

He Adds Soy Oil To Soybeans

Minnesota farmer Harold Fick keeps dust down in soybeans by adding soy oil to beans as he augers them into his bins.

According to a recent report in The Farmer magazine, Fick uses a simple 12-volt spray pump hooked to a 15-gal. poly tank. He squirts oil onto beans as they pour out of his grain wagons into the auger hopper using a spray wand at the rate of one burst every 15 sec. He uses about 15 gal. of oil to treat 12,000 to

15,000 bu.

The \$4.10 per gal. cost of oil is recovered when he sells the beans because the weight of the oil is added to the selling weight of the beans. Adding oil doesn't eliminate all dust but you get rid of the real fine powder, which causes the greatest health hazard. Best of all, Fick likes the idea that he's using his own product to solve the problem.