

COUNTY TOUR SHOWS DAIRY INDUSTRY IMPORTANCE

Modern Efficiency In Operations Told

By Bill Force
Mail Tribune Staff Writer

Since the war Jackson county's dairy industry has shown phenomenal growth, increasing in both numbers of stock and acreage devoted to production of feed for dairy cattle. Dairymen are now the second largest agricultural enterprise in the county, surpassed in amount of income only by the horticultural business. Dairymen here earned \$2,900,000 in 1949—16 per cent of the total agricultural income.

But expansion would mean little to the county's farm economy unless accompanied by sound business practices and agricultural know-how. In this respect, local dairymen have shown considerable diversity in what they feel is the most efficient and economical type of physical plant and management program.

A brief tour of four dairies, regarded as the best local exemplifications of four different schools of thought on dairy barn set-ups, revealed mechanization so advanced as to make the city dweller's eyes pop. While methods and equipment in the four dairies differed, all were designed for maximum production with the least amount of effort and they all exhibited the same constant preoccupation with sanitary standards.

Four Visited

The four dairies visited were: Victor Birdseye's ranch on the Central Point-Jacksonville highway, Rene Espourteille's Far Hills ranch near Shady Cove, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Bohling's Junad dairy near Eagle Point, and Roscoe Robert's Roxanna dairy on Spring street in Medford. The four can be considered representative of what is best in the county's nearly 1,000 dairies.

At his farm, Victor Birdseye has evolved what he believes to be the optimum size and arrangement to handle his milking herd of 53 Jerseys. His "milking parlor" is of conventional design—20 stanchions, 10 on each side of the building, are built on one level and have cleaning gutters running the full length of the room.

Milked in Shifts

Cows enter the Birdseye barn in "shifts" with ten being milked at one time, and then let out while the machines are moved to the other string of 10. Birdseye is said to be one of very few dairymen anywhere who has his herd so perfectly trained that each cow enters and leaves the barn in precisely the same order each day and goes directly to her own stanchion. While stanchion and string-broke herds may be common in small operations, they are considered unusual and highly efficient in large dairies.

Birdseye's methods require two men for each milking, and milking time averages one hour and 45 minutes. He cites several advantages of his set-up: There is never an idle machine; there are only a few cows in the room at a time so that cleaning is a small problem, and there is no lost motion and no congestion.

Average High

He feeds only grain in the milking barn; the cows get their hay and silage in the feed barn. Birdseye feeds 60 per cent grass silage and 40 per cent hay, and his herd's butterfat production last year averaged 389 pounds, against a state average of 286 pounds.

One outstanding feature of the Birdseye ranch is the impeccable cleanliness. Daily scraping of the concrete paved yards is a part of each day's chores. No accumulation of manure is allowed and it is spread on the fields at the time it is gathered. Only the recent bad weather has interrupted the regularity of the operation.

At the well-named Far Hills ranch in the picturesque mountains above Shady Cove, Mr.

and Mrs. Rene Espourteille have installed an elaborate dairymen operation that is called the ultimate in dairy barns fitted with De Laval equipment. At present they are milking a registered herd of 41 Holsteins in a concrete "milking parlor" with six elevated tubular steel stanchions. They are milked three times daily in an effort to boost production, and Ranch Manager Bill Leekey says the job takes one operator about three and a half minutes per cow.

He likes the Far Hills set-up because he says it is well adapted to the needs of a registered herd. Daily production is quickly and accurately recorded at the time the cow is milked. Milk passes directly from the De Laval milkers into large glass jars suspended from scales. It can be inspected for any possible flaws or impurities before it is pumped into the pipe lines to the milk room. Just about the only manual operation required in the Espourteille barn is putting the lids on the milk cans after the milk has passed over the cooling coils, through automatically operated spigots, and into the cans.

Unique Barn

Junad dairy on the Rogue above Eagle Point is owned by Fred Bohling and his actress wife June Story. Their unique dairy barn is of corrugated quonset construction and features eight stanchions set on a gutterless concrete floor. Gutters were eliminated to improve the footing for the cows and manure is hosed directly off the smooth pavement. De Laval equipment is used here also.

It takes one operator two hours to milk 30 Holsteins at Junad, and with the addition of an extra man on the morning shift the time is cut to an hour and a half.

Said Compact

Hallmark of the Roxanna dairy in Medford's eastern outskirts is compactness combined with streamlined efficiency. Mr. and Mrs. Roscoe Roberts have installed Surge equipment with four steel stanchions raised about three feet above the level of the operator's gangway that runs the length of the "milking parlor." Stanchion layout is roughly similar to that of the angle parking of cars on a city street. In other words, each stanchion angles in toward the operator to provide maximum convenience. Planned jointly by Roberts and the Surge people, Roxanna is a 42-cow capacity dairy complete on seven acres of suburban property. Milking parlor, milk room, feed room, and an apartment for a manager are compactly arranged under one roof.

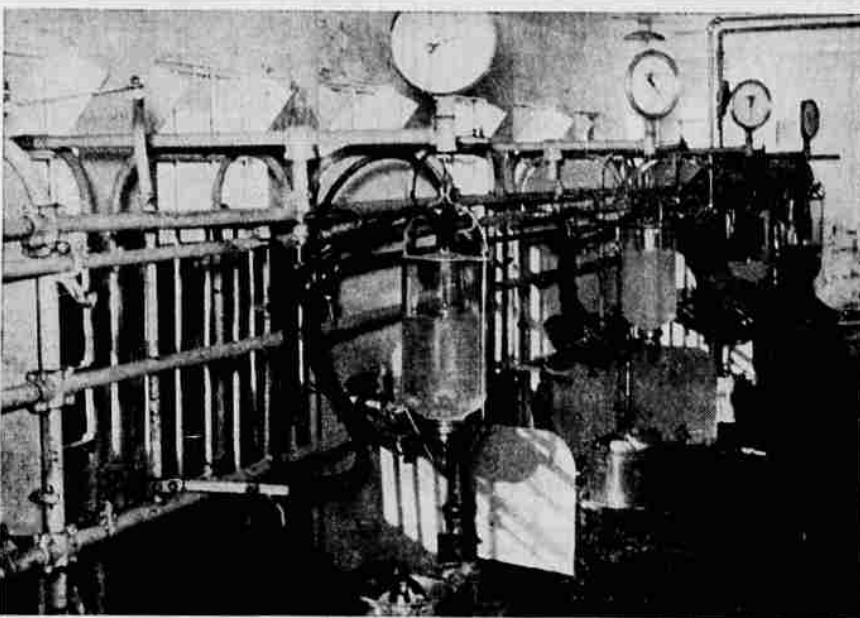
It takes Roberts and his wife about an hour and a half to milk from 28 to 30 head of cows with their arrangement. Their herd is made up of Holsteins, Brown Swiss, Guernseys, and Jerseys. Unlike Birdseye, who produces his own feed, Roberts

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FAR HILLS MILKING PARLOR—Rene Espourteille's registered Holstein herd is confronted with this imposing array of machinery three times daily. Six stanchions are elevated above the operator's gangway for the sake of convenience in operating the De Laval milkers. At the time this picture was taken noon milking had just been completed and the glass jars that receive and weigh the milk from the milking machines here contain disinfectant and the operator is washing the room and equipment to a state of hospital-like cleanliness. Natives of France, the Espourteilles are developing a model dairy in the Shady Cove area.

makes no effort to grow feed on his small acreage but his readiness to feed dealers in town does much to offset any added expense.

Size Said Advantage

In 1948 Roberts was operating a 74-acre dairy with about the same size herd he has now and he cited production figures that may show the advantages of compactness in a dairy operation.

Last year, at Roxanna, Robert's herd produced 248,000 pounds of milk for an average of 8,268 per cow. On a farm 10 times as large, a similar herd produced 234,854 pounds of milk. Comparable butterfat production was 10,331 pounds at Roxanna and 10,006 at the larger dairy. His butterfat average last year was 334.47 pounds per cow. Robert's operation could be duplicated on less than an acre, he said.

Outside the milking parlors the same efficiency and attention to detail prevails and the professional skill that is required to run a dairy becomes more and more evident.

Use "Loafing Pens"

A practice called "pen stabling" in the east takes the form of "loafing pens" here. On the Birdseye ranch a huge roofed area is available to the herd day and night for just what the name implies—loafing. The other dairies have variations of the same facility. Here the cows are free to eat to their heart's content and to rest in knee deep straw. It is cleaned only once in many months but new layers of straw are added from time to time. Birdseye says the decomposing straw helps to provide a bedding area of constant warmth.

Electric heaters in water tanks are another innovation of particular importance this time of year. The apparatus keeps the tanks free of ice and just warm enough to encourage ample drinking. County Agent Earle Jossy emphasized that top milk production is directly contingent on the amount of water a cow can be induced to drink. Birdseye stocks his water tank with gold fish to help maintain cleanliness.

Assistant Ready

A specialist in animal husbandry and dairymen, Jossy stands ready to assist and advise dairymen at any time, and his office is a kind of clearing house for ideas, projects, and problems affecting the industry here. He makes available complete plans furnished by the extension service, for scientifically designed dairy barns, and newcomers to the field would be well advised to consult with him before they begin to learn the intricacies of a milking machine. It is only through planning and skill that Jackson county's dairy industry can continue to grow soundly and at its present pace.

Volunteer Firemen Save Chief's House

Warrenton, Ore., Feb. 4.—U.P.—Fire Chief Larry Lenhard today had only the highest praise for his volunteer firefighters. They saved his house from burning down.

A torch a workman was using to thaw frozen pipes at Chief Lenhard's home ignited oil escaping from a broken fuel line. The fire spread to the foundation of the house.

But firemen jumped to the task and saved their chief's house from all but a little smoke damage.

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Farmer-Veterans OK Conservation Plan

Members of the Veterans Agriculture association this week voted unanimously in favor of the proposed Jackson county soil conservation district, when they met to observe the first anniversary of the group's formation. The meeting was held at the association headquarters at White City.

Plans are under way to compile and publish a list of members in all areas of southern Oregon so that interested veteran-farmers may contact them for information. Veterans of World War II who are actively engaged in agriculture are eligible for membership.

New officers presided at the meeting for the first time, and committees were named to map out a program for 1950 which will be "even bigger and more successful" than 1949, officers said.

The evening was closed with the serving of refreshments.

Boise, Ida., Feb. 3.—U.P.—The Columbia basin inter-agency committee will hold its next meeting at Salem, Ore., next Wednesday. State Reclamation Engineer Mark R. Klul said.

Volunteer Firemen Set Monday Meeting

Acting Fire Chief Leo Weidner, who arrived here from Portland Wednesday, said Saturday that a meeting of all volunteer firemen in Medford will be held at the fire station at 7:30 p.m. Monday.

In addition to volunteers, Chief Weidner said, all residents of Medford who are interested in becoming volunteer firemen are invited to attend the discussions of volunteer organizations and problems.

Weidner, who is on "loan" to the city from the Portland fire department, is senior captain, assistant instructor and drill master with the Portland department. His experience also includes work with volunteers, and he is drill master with the Multnomah volunteer department.

The acting chief, whose stay here as a consultant will be for approximately four months, is living in the fire hall. His family, including his wife and three sons, is remaining in Portland while he is here.

Unidentified Submarine Probably U. S. Vessel

San Francisco, Feb. 4.—U.P.—An unidentified submarine, twice seen off the northern California coast during the past week, probably was a U. S. navy vessel making test runs, a 12th naval district spokesman said today.

American submarines frequently make test runs off the coast after being repaired at Mare Island navy yard, the spokesman said.

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