

QUALITY MILK PANEL

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The purpose of a panel-topic discussion, I assume, is to relate to others our personal ideas of this topic, "Quality-Milk" and how each of us strive to produce milk of such a quality that the public is willing to use. Therefore, I will try to discuss some of my personal management experiences as Manager of Roberts Dairy, Inc. and how they affect the quality of milk which we produce.

There is no one important part or step which will enable you to produce good quality milk or control mastitis, but many phases must be considered such as: Physical facilities, Equipment and Care, Handling Milk Cows in large numbers, Milking procedure and Practices, Supervision and Control of labor force.

I feel it is necessary to have a milking parlor adequate in size to milk the number of cows desired with the proper kind and size of equipment to do an excellent job.

When designing our new double twelve milking parlor I kept in mind three things. First, design a parlor which will be comfortable for our women milkers. Second, be able to do a good job milking cows. Third, design the facilities to enable us to conveniently handle at least 1000 milk cows.

In our operation we operate two of three vacuum pumps that pull over 100 C. F. M. of air each for the twelve milking units with a double three inch stainless steel milk line and a three inch looped galvanized vacuum line. This enables us to have very little fluctuation in vacuum level which is very important in milking equipment. I believe it is essential to correct equipment malfunctions and keep equipment in proper condition as a major part of a quality milk control program. Milking machines, milk lines, milk tank, etc., should be properly cleaned and sanitized in order to preserve milk quality by preventing increase in number of bacteria.

A refrigeration system should be designed to properly cool the milk immediately when taken from the cows. Milk of good quality when produced can be of poor quality in several hours without proper refrigeration. Therefore, we should strive to maintain the quality of the product we produce. At Roberts Dairy we bring our milk to about 70°F. with the use of a plate cooler and well water before entering a 6000 gallon milk tank with two ten horsepower compressors attached.

Another part of physical facilities which is important on large herds, with limited area, is the use of concrete to keep cows from wading in mud and a sufficient supply of water. Both of these items are essential in producing high quality milk.

Our cows are grouped according to production. This enables us to do a better job of milking and also allows us to feed more in accordance with production. Beginning with each milking crew at 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. we milk our number four herd, all of our slow milking cows that need additional attention for proper milking, the number three herd, the number two herd and the number

one herd respectfully. These herds are grouped according to their production. Then we milk the zero herd. This herd consists of all cows and heifers, freshened during the past two months. By grouping the cows like this we can give better care and attention to the herds during milking, feeding and breeding practices.

We have made excellent use of the old milking parlor using it for our fresh cows and health problem cows. When a cow shows any abnormal milk, she is removed from the regular milking herds and enters this herd. A dependable, well trained individual cares for this herd twice each day. He checks each cow and treatment is given when necessary. All fresh and health cows remain here until milk is ready to save. The California Mastitis Test is used routinely. I personally feel the attention given this herd is one of the most important phases of our operation. We usually have from one half of one percent up to one and one half percent of the total milking herd in this health problem herd because of mastitis. This ranges from five to fifteen cows out of our milking herd of approximately 1000 cows.

The value of good practiced milking procedures is unlimited in any dairy operation. When Mr. Q. I Roberts, owner of Roberts Dairy, Inc., and I decided to increase the herd size and build a new milking parlor and feeding barn I did a lot of thinking on the design of the building and equipment needed in order to accomplish the best, that I knew, in milking procedures. The milking procedure applied at Roberts Dairy consists of the cows coming through a rain-bird sprinkling system which holds 74 cows and they remain here for about one half hour before entering a drip area outside the milking parlor. When the twelve cows come into one side of the parlor, the women milkers wash the udder with a tempered water supply containing a sanitizing solution with the udder wash hose and their hand. The use of a strip plate helps assure milk quality before drying the udder with a disposable paper towel. The milking machines are then applied, machine stripped and removed when cows are milked out. The teats are then dipped with bovadine, this I feel is probably the most important individual step in our milking procedure in controlling and preventing mastitis.

I feel the use of women milkers is of great value to our operation. Since we have employed women they appear to be more dependable, honest, and sincere in their work than men. They are more easily trained to do a good job milking cows, cleaner in milk habits and are more sympathetic toward swollen or injured udders. They are more gentle toward the cows and usually are quieter during work.

I have mentioned some of the milk management factors I consider important in producing good quality milk. I feel that dairymen must evaluate their own milking systems and practices, be willing to make changes for improvement in facilities, equipment, feeding, breeding, milking procedure and people management. Dairymen who strive to improve in these areas will increase profits and produce good quality milk.