

Complete Dairy Feeds, Residues in Feed Top Subjects at Florida Event

FT. LAUDERDALE, FLA. — As labor becomes more expensive and harder to find, dairymen today are taking a hard look at automation and complete rations containing roughages fed to cattle in individually developed automatic systems.

Florida is leading the way in this field of producing an all-complete ration with roughage, according to figures revealed at the Florida Feed Assn. convention here. The data showed that many Florida dairies don't harvest any feed at all. This is in direct contrast to dairy farms throughout the country, where the storing and harvesting of forages is a major part of the dairy enterprise.

Basically, Florida is a state that doesn't produce enough forage material for dairy farms. But, in recent years, the price of farm labor has skyrocketed, and dairy farms in the state are turning to automation wherever possible.

"There is a continuing trend toward automation. The use of low-moisture forage and high-moisture grains is important to the dairyman and today less forage is being harvested due to poor weather, high labor costs and the high cost of storage," said C. J. Wilcox, of the department of dairy science, University of Florida.

All-Complete Rations

In the Okeechobee area, where there are large dairy herds, feed mills are producing the all-complete rations, delivering them on regular schedules to dairies that have, for the most part, discontinued feeding forage materials that have to be handled by labor on the farms.

The all-complete ration is attracting attention not only from herd owners in the state, but dairymen from many other states have visited operations in the Okeechobee area and are "amazed at what is taking place," according to Wilcox.

It's all part of the trend among dairymen to automate wherever possible and reduce production costs. Not only is automation taking place in the Florida all-complete rations, but it is also developing in concentrate handling, with the utilization of bulk techniques that have become commonplace in the poultry industry. Automation is going right down the line from milking

herds, the use of artificial insemination increases. Today, he said, superior semen is available, genetically speaking, and Florida continues to lead the nation in A.I. In 1948, only 5% of the cattle were artificially inseminated. Today the national average is 51% and Florida shows 94%.

Turning again to feed, he offered data from South Carolina showing that the feeding of concentrates has increased by more than 50% since 1948 and has resulted in more income and less feed cost per 100 lb. of milk produced.

Genetically speaking, the trend in the U.S. appears to be toward Holsteins, he said. After World War II, 30% of the cows were Holsteins. Based on semen sales today, he said, 80% of the

herds appear to be Holsteins.

CHEMICAL RESIDUES IN FEED

— Feed manufacturers were cautioned at the Florida convention to look for a different type of residue coming, not from pesticides, but from an industrial chemical known as PCB. PCB is polychlorinated biphenyls. At least one manufacturer has been making it for about 40 years, and it has been used in a variety of ways — as a waterproofing agent, a lubricant, sealant, adhesive, in paints, as well as a number of other ways.

Paul Crist of the feed control department of the Florida Department of Agriculture, said this chemical has shown up in feeds in a number of cases and is creating some new and unexpected problems in feed manufacturing.

"Some of you have contacted us about it.

It really isn't a pesticide as such. It is really an industrial chemical