

Cleanliness and Methods of Milking

Before treating of the actual process of milking, which has much to do with the success of dairy management, it may not be out of place to offer some observations on the nature and treatment of the cow. When we consider the enormous bulk of food supplies handled daily throughout the world in the shape of milk, cream, butter and cheese, it is not to speak of the number of calves raised—the cow's position as a producer appears marvellous and her value to man incalculable. Notwithstanding which, no other animal as regards her material instincts, is treated with so little consideration. In a state of nature, the cow shares with other animals the satisfaction of suckling her offspring, yielding just sufficient milk for that purpose. Whereas in her captive state, as the outcome of domestication, and cultivation of the milking habit, she is denied this privilege; her calf is taken from her, and she is subjected to the unnatural process of artificial milking, with its greatly increased output. This alone is sufficient reason why the utmost consideration should be shown towards the cow by the milker, whom, perhaps, the animal may come, by usage, to regard as a sort of calf.

It may be accepted that the more closely the hands of the milker can imitate the action of the calf in drawing the milk the more freely will it be yielded, and the more successful will the milking be. To milk a cow intelligently, therefore, regard must be had to the position of the animal as a mother, and to the fact that the milker usurps the place of the calf, in securing for family and commercial purposes the milk provided by nature for the offspring.

The cows should be brought into the yards and cow sheds as gently and quietly as possible, without being overdriven or excited in any way either by drivers or dogs. Milking should be performed thoroughly, kindly, quietly, and as quickly as possible. The cow must be encouraged to give her milk freely, and this can best be done by adopting a system of careful and kindly treatment, more especially during her first milking season. For a few weeks after the date of her first calving, the udder of a young cow is often strained and tender, requiring particular care and attention, as neglect or unkind treatment at this period would in all probability stamp her as a kicker, besides injuriously affecting her milking qualities. Before commencing to milk, great care should be taken to rub with a rough, dry, clean cloth, the udder and teats so as to remove therefrom particles of dust and dirt which will always be found adhering, and would otherwise fall into the milk pail, producing most undesirable changes in the milk. The hands of the milker should be washed with soap and water, and dried previous to milking. On some dairy farms the milkers wash and dry their hands after every cow. Cleanliness of milking is essential to the production of good milk, good butter and good cheese. The first drawn drops of milk should be milked on to the ground and not into the milk pail. Where this is done, clean bedding should be placed underneath the cows when they are milked in the yards, the place of milking should be changed frequently. The action in milking should be gentle, yet rapid. Clumsy, slow methods of milking irritate the cow, and cause her to hold back her milk.

The teats should be firmly grasped, and a full, continuous stream of milk drawn, changing frequently from one quarter of the udder over to the others, and milking all four quarters as evenly as possible. When the flow of milk ceases, gentle handling and stroking of the udder will stimulate the activity of the nerve glands to renewed action in milk secretion, and thus encourage the cow to give a little more milk. Moreover, the last drawn drops of milk, generally known as the strappings, are far richer in butter fat than the first drawn and if a cow retains part of the contents of her udder at each milking she will soon diminish her milk yield and become prematurely dry. If one or two cows in a herd have got warts on their teats, care should be taken not to milk these until all the other cows are milked, and the same precaution should be taken when cows have got sore or chapped teats. Milking should be done punctually, at the same hours every day. Cows accustomed to be milked at regular intervals, know the proper hours as well as those whose duty it is to look after them, and should any interruption or irregularity occur they will speedily let their uneasiness become known, and whatever causes discomfort to the cow will tell more or less on her produce.

Good temper and gentleness ought to be made leading features during the process of milking. Quietness is also essential to the best performance of the cow, for not only will the quantity of milk secreted be affected by the nervous state of the cow, but its richness may sometimes be influenced even when the quantity produced is normal. Great patience has to be exercised when dealing with kicking cows. Kicking is almost invariably due to some external cause, which should, if possible, be ascertained and removed. Sometimes the fault is due to the milker. Long finger nails digging into the teats during the operation of milking will irritate the best tempered animal. Warts on the teats and chapped teats are also a source of trouble in milking. Usually patience and kindness will overcome the most vicious animal and until these have been fully tried no other means should be resorted to. In some circumstances, however, judicious firmness has proved successful in subduing a kicking cow where gentler means has failed. In dealing with a herd of cows much judgment is required and their individual peculiarities must be studied.

W. CRECHTON
York Co., Ont.

Cold Storage Curing

Several of the cheese factories in the Waterford district are, this year, shipping their cheese to Montreal from three days to one week old. They are sold there to a large exporting firm, which places them in cold storage until cured for re-shipment across the Atlantic. This plan, Mr. W. R. Shearer, of Villa Nova, who acts as general salesman for the factories, says is working very well. The cheese are not kept long enough in the factories to become overheated, and as cold curing has been demonstrated to be the best kind of curing, they have every advantage in the way of facilities for this purpose. These factories are in one of the Association syndicates where uniform instruction is given in cheese-making. With uniform methods of making and uniform curing, the product should turn out very fine.

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