

Automation In Dairy Industry Brings Many Changes During Recent Years

Now they've got the cows "punching a time clock."

The time clock adjusts the automatic feeder while the automatic milker pumps away. As milk is weighed through the meter, connected with the automatic feeder, each cow is fed according to her production of milk.

Less than 20 years ago, Tar Heel dairy farmers were squatting under the cows in the old-type stanchion barn, milking into buckets. Today, most of them use electric milkers in automatically cleaned buildings.

"Soon the dairyman will handle 60 cows by himself—if he's an able, experienced manager who knows the physiology of the cow well," predicts Dairy Specialist Marvin Senger of North Carolina State College. "Even today, automation is so advanced that one man can handle 35-40 cows."

Some, in fact, may be handling more. But Senger believes they're milking too many cows too quickly.

Dairying is changing in many other ways: Feed production, feed handling, breeding, methods of gauging production, housing.

"It may not be long before you'll drive through land that can be used for crops and see hardly a cow on pasture," says Senger. "They'll be living in dry lots with simple lounging sheds instead of the big old barns where each cow had a stall. Forage crops will be handled to the cows."

The cows will find their table set all the time, whether it's a concrete trench silo full of sweet forage or a tall "tub" silo with an auger that churns out a tossed salad of feed pellets and grain and corn silage.

"After raising, grinding, mixing and processing his feed, the farmer will give his cows silage or grain feed automatically all year 'round," says Senger.

Or he may buy his feed from a grain producer, or a feed manufacturer who delivers in bulk tanks.

With the fading of pasture one reason: The high cost of land, the use of hay is dropping, too. Pasture, says Senger, fails in hot dry months to provide all the nutrients a cow needs. It is also hard to harvest and store high-quality hay to furnish nutrients in the cheapest form.

"The big shift is to corn silage," he says. "A man gets more use out of his silo (an expensive item) if he fills it two or three times a year instead of once as he used to do."

But silage isn't enough for today's high-producing cow. She needs mixed meals, perhaps in pelleted form, and grain and silage three or four times a day, for higher consumption without stuffing herself.

"Automation in handling feed is the best development



FIELD INSPECTION.—These men are looking a burley crop over in the field. The effect of the economy of the county has risen from nothing to one and a quarter million dollars in just 33 years when no tobacco

was set here, according to L. E. Tuckwiller, Watauga county agricultural agent. A 6% increase in burley allotments in the county is expected to add another \$70,000 income to farmers if prices hold at last year's levels.

of recent years in dairy feeding," says Senger. "It lets the dairyman put the cows on a regular schedule, by using time clocks to turn on the feeders." The pride or shame of a cow is her record in milk and butterfat production. Ten years ago, if she averaged 240 pounds of fat and 6,000 pounds of milk a year, her owner just about broke even on her. The break-even point today is about 300 pounds of fat and 7,700 pounds of milk.

Shameful is the record of the "average cow" in the state: 5,640 pounds of milk a year—a losing proposition. But the average cow in that "exclusive club," the Dairy Herd Improvement Association, does her owner proud at 9,100 pounds of milk—she's getting to be a profit-maker.

Now a new production gauge is vying for a place in the dairy picture: The percentage of "solids-not-fat" a cow puts in her milk.

"This may become more important than butterfat percentage," says Senger. "We're seeing more emphasis all the time on cutting fats out of foods."

"Progress on solids-not-fat probably will come through breeding rather than through feeding, because of the high-quality blood through artificial breeding," says Senger. "The top ten per cent of bulls work for artificial breeding groups."

Artificial breeding has played a big part in raising milk and butterfat production. It has been a major factor in the reduction of the numbers of Tar Heel dairy farms from 5,200 in 1955 to 3,800 in 1961.

But fewer farms means larger herds, for most of the cows in those 1,400 dairies that went out of business were sold to the ones that stayed in.

"The true measure of the size of the farmer's dairy business is in total pounds of milk produced," says Senger. "This will come through some in-

crease in number of cows, but more through higher production per cow."

"The family dairy will continue to play an important part in the dairy industry. Farmers will continue to supplement other income by producing manufacturing milk, too."

Many Expected To Die In Holiday Traffic Accidents

Sudden death will blight the Thanksgiving holidays for at least 23 persons in traffic accidents on North Carolina's streets and highways, predicts the N. C. State Motor Club.

The official highway fatality count will extend from 6 p. m. Wednesday, Nov. 21, through midnight Sunday, Nov. 25, a period of 102 hours.

The state's Thanksgiving traffic toll for the same period last year added up to 27 deaths in 23 fatal accidents, with speeding listed as the cause of nine of the fatalities. Another 631 persons suffered injuries in a total of 977 accidents.

Heading the list of driver violations were: speeding, 188; drove left of center, 148; failed to yield right of way, 146; following too closely, 118; and

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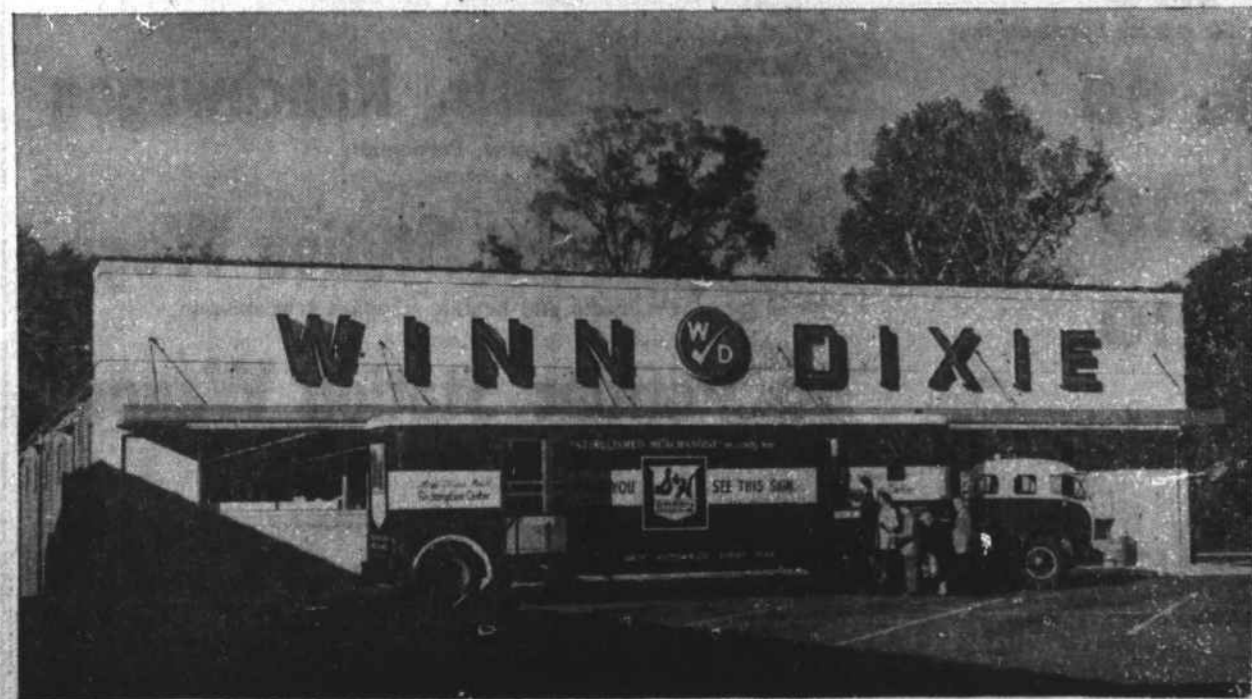
reckless driving, 109.

Thomas B. Watkins, president of N. C. State Motor Club and the National Automobile Association, advised, "If you and your family have managed to avoid a traffic accident so far this year, be grateful and count your blessing this Thanksgiving Day."

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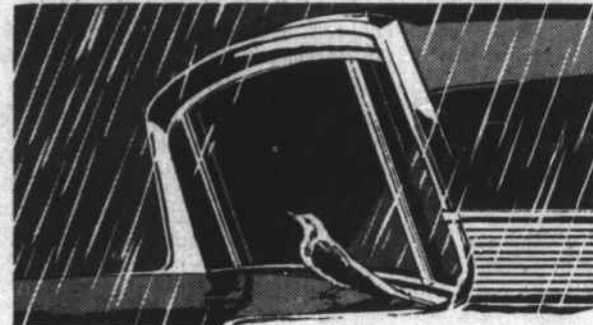


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