

## WHAT THE MILKING MACHINE HAS DONE FOR THE DAIRYMAN.

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The milking machine among mechanical devices is a good deal like Mark Twain's dog, as he described him chasing a jack-rabbit. He said of him, "he is in a class very much by himself". This is because of the element of uncertainty and nerveness which goes with the machine and the nature of the work which it is to perform. This work means dollars of profit or loss to the farmer accordingly as it is well or badly performed.

But let us begin at the beginning. In the first place I wish every dairyman in my hearing this afternoon to distinctly understand that what I shall say is for the purpose of giving you the facts as I have found them in the dairy which I operate. I am not paid by any company to talk this afternoon and I am not even interested financially in the machine which I operate.

When Mr. South, on whose farm I live and whose machine I operate, talked of installing a milking machine I said nothing, because I was doubtful of the outcome; but when he installed it I determined to do the best possible.

Logically the first thing to consider is the cost of the machine. The B. L. K. machine may be installed for from five to seven hundred dollars, according to the size of your barn, the number of pails you wish to use and the power which you employ. In about twenty months use of the

B. L. K. Milker our actual repairs on account of breakage or imperfect pieces of machinery has been less than five dollars and the rubbers I have now will last almost another year. As we run a sixty light dynamo with the same gasoline engine that we run the air pumps with I cannot give the actual cost of running the machinery. Running the lights and all however it takes about twelve gallons per week at a cost in wholesale quantities of  $11\frac{1}{2}$  cents per gallon and at retail prices from 14 to 18 cents per gallon. I would say here that it is very essential to have good light while operating the machine.

The machines need good attention while operating and unless a man is willing to do this himself or at least see that some one else does so he better not install one.

There are many difficulties arising in the operating of the machines, such as keeping the rubber parts in perfect repair, seeing that the rubber mouth-pieces fits the teat in such a way that no air is admitted to break the vacuum, keeping the relief valves open and the frictional parts well cleaned and lubricated. The regular pressure must be maintained so that the teats and udders will not become inflamed or sore. I find that many of these things are hard of accomplishment because of the lack of interest on the part of operators, the varying quantities of milk which some cows give and the different construction and texture of some cows teats and udders. These difficulties are more numerous in the summer months than the winter months.

We always strip after milking in order to keep better posted on how the machines are handling the cows; the amount of striping varying from one to four gallons on a bunch of forty cows. Perhaps some of you dairymen say this does not sound very well and to say the truth some of these conditions are not as I would wish them. However, by patience and perserverence, I have for twenty months milked a bunch of thirty-five or forty cows with a fair degree of success. We find that most of the difficulties can be surmounted. but some of them cannot and at the

present time we have some cows that we cannot milk well enough with the machine to continue the use of the same upon the cows.

I believe any farmer who is willing to stay by the work can milk twenty-five or thirty cows and not do too much; and where a man could otherwise accomplish the rest of his farm duties the machines may save him many dollars in hired help as it does me.

Many here would ask the question, "do the cows take kindly to the machine?" They do, and besides many nervous cows stand much better for the machine than they do for hand-milkers. This class of cows, as a rule, give more milk when milked by the machine than when milked by hand. Since operating the machine I have broken a dozen or fifteen heifers and I find that they not only take to it kindly, but they milk better than old cows and some of them lick the machine as they would a calf nursing them.

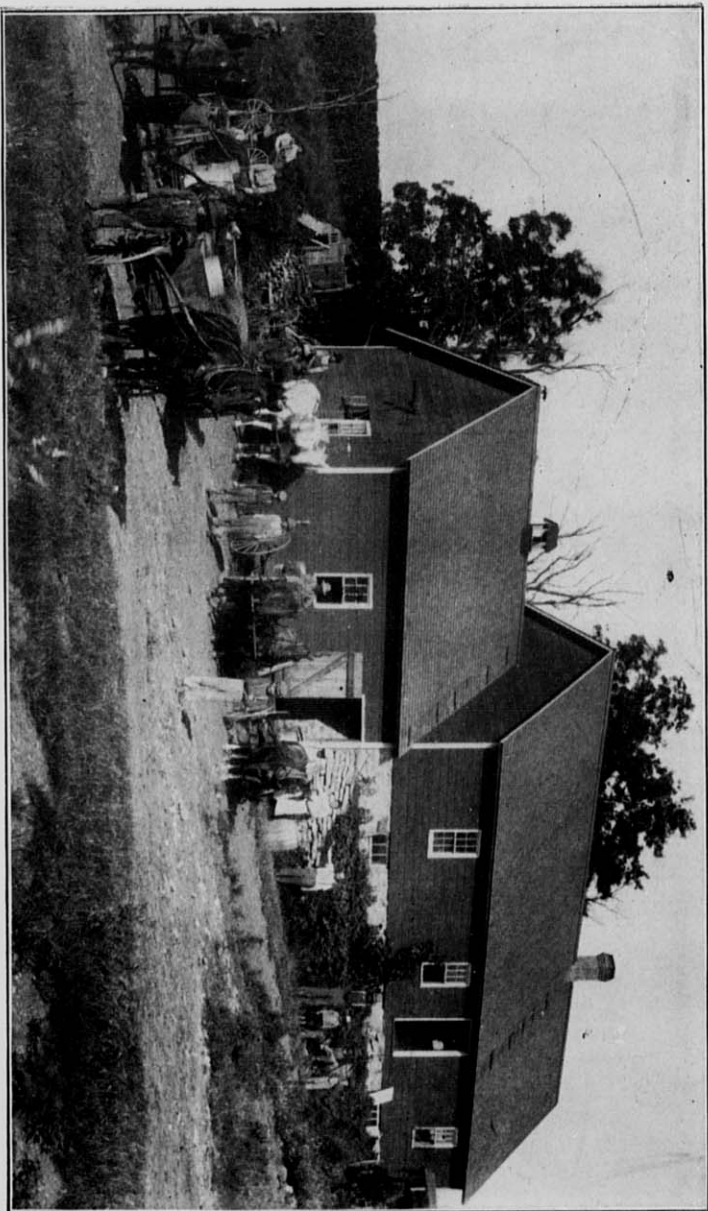
With much care-taking a very high grade of milk may be produced with the machine. If the cows teats are clean and the teat-cups are properly handled during the operation there is very little show for any dirt to get into the milk. But when one of the cups happen to drop off there may be a little chaff or dirt drawn in from the floor.

Many ask me if it is not a terrible task to keep the machine clean. It is not. After each milking large quantities of fresh water are drawn thru the machine, thus thoroughly rinsing it. It is then placed in a strong solution of salt and water, that is the rubber parts. The other parts are washed as you would any other utensil and with a little more labor. Then at stated periods we have our regular wash days when the whole machine is reduced to parts and thoroughly cleansed.

I have made no attempt to tell you anything other than my own experience and I wish to say that what I have done with the milkers anyone with the same amount of care, patience and perserverence may do. There are many

sources of information on this subject of which the most complete and classified is Bulletin No. 173 of the University of Wisconsin.

I wish to say in closing that the possibilities of the milking machine, as a time and money saver, lies greatly in the farmer and his willingness to select his cows the same for the machine as for hand-milking, to employ careful operators and to oversee the work in general himself. Then I believe his cows will not be injured and he may milk them with economy, profit and ease.



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