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FARM NEWS

NEWBORN CALVES NEED EXTRA CARE FOR GOOD START

Newborn calves, like any babies, need extra special care, say Michigan State College dairymen. They offer farmers some tips based on observation of the MSC dairy herd.

Colostrum milk is real medicine for newborn calves. Dr. C. F. Huffman, dairy researcher at MSC, says this first milk contains many health factors that help to guard the calf. It shouldn't be wasted.

The nipple pail has done much to reduce calf digestive troubles by forcing the calf to drink slowly. The milk in small sips goes down into the true stomach where it can be digested.

Don't overfeed the calf on milk, the dairymen suggest. Give it ten per cent of its body weight or less daily. Too much milk upsets the calf's stomach.

It is not necessary to inoculate the calf with rumen bacteria if the calf lives in the general barn where it will pick up the healthy bacteria easily. If the calf is raised apart from the herd, it should be provided with hay that cows have nuzzled over. Such hay is annointed with good bacteria that may have come up from the cow's rumen.

Hay which has been nuzzled by cows is good for calf medication if needed but not for the real hay ration. Green, leafy hay should be placed before the calf from its first week of life.

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Grass And Legume Crops Hold Key To Added Meat And Milk Supplies

"Grass and legumes hold the key to more meat and milk in Michigan and in the United States as well," according to R. W. Bell, farm crops authority at Michigan State College.

Four big reasons have been summarized by the MSC agricultural specialist to back up this statement. Bell says the first is that as pasture, hay and grass silage, grasslands provide the main raw materials for livestock products, especially beef, dairy products, mutton and wool.

He points out that in the period 1941 to 1946, pasture and hay provided over 51 per cent of the nutrients consumed by all classes of livestock in the United States.

The second reason that grasslands are of such importance is the enormous potentialities they hold for increased feed production. Even with the limited knowledge we have today, much of the unimproved land in Michigan could be converted to grow highly productive grass and legume crops.

A third reason that grasslands hold the key to more meat and milk is that on much of the cropland of the state, grasses and legumes will produce more total digestible nutrients per acre than will corn and other feed grains, at lower cost and with greater returns for an hour of labor.

The fourth reason is that improved grasslands are necessary in crop rotation to maintain top production of other crops in the rotation. No other cropping system has yet been devised for Michigan agriculture that will maintain the organic matter of the soil except rotations that include adequate quantities of grasses and legumes.

"These facts have been proved by experiments and by the experiences of Michigan farmers," Bell concluded.

The Grist Mill

By Ed Alchin
County Agricultural Agent

The Oakland County Soil Conservation Directors, in cooperation with The Michigan Flying Farmers, have planned another air tour for this year. June 5 is the date, but inclement weather will postpone it until June 6. Allen's airport, located in Silverbell Road, one mile west of M-24, is the place. Area to be covered includes the northeast part of Oakland County.

Fourteen points of interest will be covered in the area. Some non-farm points will be observed, as well as farms having soil conservation practices established.

Over 100 farmers attended the tour in 1951 held in the northwest section of Oakland County and most were pleased that they had taken the flight. This year's affair will be no less interesting, with points of interest emphasizing diversions, terrace systems, tree planting, open drainage and tile drainage, strip cropping and sod water ways.

The flights will leave Allen's Airport, cover one-quarter of Pontiac, Goodison, Orion, Lakeville, Oxford, Oakwood, Ortonville and back to Allen's Airport. Many farms not listed as points of interest to observe will be flown over in the area. Licensed commercial pilots will do the flying of four-place planes and the flights will be scheduled so that farmers need not stay more than an hour to be able to make the flight.

Tickets are available through any of the Soil Conservation District Directors, our office, or Bob Koons at the Soil Conservation office.

Tent Caterpillars Are Out Again This Year

Willard E. Bosserman, Assistant County Agricultural Agent, reports that the tent caterpillar is with us again. If they are not controlled this year, there will be more next year.

They can be controlled with a mixture of 2 tablespoons of 50% wettable DDT per gallon of water. Another solution is two tablespoons of arsenate of lead per gallon of water.

A third solution, methoxychlor, is the safest to use. Mixing four tablespoons to one gallon of water will give best results. All three are poisonous, so use with caution.

EARLY PLOW-UNDER OF GREEN MANURE GIVES BEST PROFITS

If you have a green manure crop ready to be plowed under for a bean crop, you'd better do it soon if you want to get the most profit from it.

Experiments at Michigan State College have shown that during two out of three years, plowing down a green manure crop May 31 gave half the yield of May 15 plowing. H. R. Pettigrove, MSC farms crops specialist, says that late rains gave sufficient moisture so there was no difference in yield during the other year.

But to avoid the risk of this being one of the two years when waiting may decrease yields, Pettigrove recommends plowing now. The difference hinges on the moisture content of the soil. The soil stores up moisture from spring rains to be used later in the season by the growing crop.

If the green manure crop is left to grow too late, it will use the soil moisture for its growth — then the soil will be dry when plowed. When you plant beans late in the dry soil, they are apt to germinate late with a poor yield. On the other hand, if the green manure crop is plowed early enough, the soil will be moist and the beans will make normal growth and give a high yield.

Farm people now make up one-seventh of the total population of the United States. If the present trend away from the farm continues at its present rate, the percentage will be reduced to only one-tenth by the year 1975.

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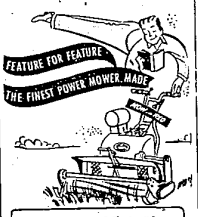

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Spring Forest Fires Dwindle In State

Further "green-up" of vegetation and some rain have slowed the spring forest fire pace, with conservation department firemen holding 51 fires to 279 acres damage.

The 1952 loss now totals 655 fires and 4,462 acres burned, or slightly under the 1951 record low of 669 fires and 4,495 damaged acres.

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