

STORIES of New Jersey

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THE ROTOLACTOR

In these days when we take for granted the high-speed production of automobiles, matches, and shoes, we are surprised to find the same principles applied to the placid and slow - moving cows in the business of milk production.

Progressive dairy farmers have used the electric milking machine for some years, but at the plant of the Walker-Gordon Company in Plainsboro we find the Rotolactor, the most aristocratic milking performance in the country. Here the cows literally occupy the center of the stage during the whole proceeding.

At the start, the cows are in eighteen big barns where they have all the comforts of home: running water, private drinking cups, especially tasty food placed under their noses, flies removed before they light, plenty of good fresh air and sunlight and absolutely nothing to do but chew their cuds and take a walk three times a day.

These walks are one of the most important parts of the whole procedure. Each barn-full in turn parades into the Rotolactor Room, with the bell cow who knows the way in the lead. As they come up the grade of the underground runway, they are in front of a big merry-go-round. This merry-go-round has only one thing in common with those at Coney Island and elsewhere - it goes around. It has no music and no horses; only cows. There are no rings to catch, and the only fare the customers are charged for the privilege of riding is milk.

In addition, they get other attentions which might not go so well on an ordinary merry-go-round. The first thing that happens to the contented cow when she steps on the Rotolactor platform is the snapping of the station bar around her neck so she cannot get away. Then as the platform moves a little, she gets a good heavy shower from both a hose and a stationary spray, just to make sure she is sweet and clean for the ride, and sometimes her toes are brushed and manicured. After the shower and another short move while some more cows go onto the platform, an attendant, in shining white uniform, picks a clean turkish towel and with it dries the cow's milk bag very thoroughly. This, of course, is unheard of on the average merry-go-round.