

Down on the Farm: Punchards Farm

Punchards Farm, Rattlesden, Suffolk

Hello, my name is Ann Tomkinson and I own a dairy farm which has 70 Jersey cows which are brown in colour. I chose to raise Jersey cows because although they produce less milk than the Friesian cows (black and white cows) their milk is higher in fat and protein. I also grow some cereals on my 140 acres of land.

The Jersey cows have all been born and raised on the farm and they spend a great deal of their time grazing on 50 acres of paddock.

After calving each cow will produce 20 litres of milk a day. The milk is put into a tanker and sold to a wholesaler who will process it and sell it to the supermarkets.

A year at my farm looks like this;

January to March

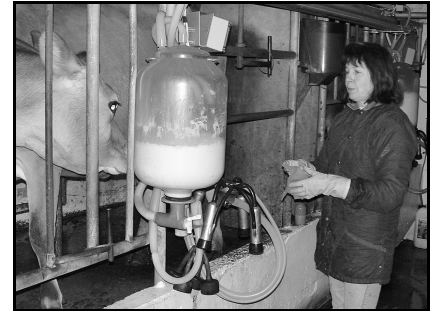
The cows stay in the yard over the winter and eat food grown for them. Rolled wheat and silage are the cows' diet over the winter months. Winter bedding is often straw grown on the farm. Sometimes farmers from nearby farms will swap their straw with manure from the cows. They can use the manure to grow their own vegetables.

March to May

The cows are let out to graze.

June

The cows' summer diet is grass. The cows are placed in one of 26 paddocks and are moved to another paddock every 24 hours. This means that they have a fresh supply of grass. Electric fences stop the cows from moving to new pastures too soon or over grazing certain areas.



July

Each cow calves once a year between July and April. The calves are left for a few days with their mothers and then moved to pens where they are fed on powdered milk and pellets. Once the cows have calved they are milked twice a day. The cows will give milk for 10 months after calving. Any cow that tries to drink milk from the other cows will have a ring placed through its nose to stop it sucking.

July and August

Some grass is cut and placed in large plastic bales and left to ferment. This will produce the silage that the animals can eat over the winter.

September to December

Most calves are born in the autumn time which means there will be a high milk production over the winter. Milk production in spring is boosted when the cows can eat fresh grass.

Questions

1. How large is Ann Punchard's farm?
2. Why does Ann keep Jersey cows when the Friesian (black and white) cows make more milk?
3. How much milk does one Jersey cow produce each day?
4. What does the cow have to do before it will produce any milk?
5. How does Anne look after the cows over the winter months?
6. When are the cows let out to graze?
7. How does Ann make sure that the cows have enough food over the summer?
8. How long does it take to milk a cow?
9. What do cows eat in summer? In winter?
10. Why do farmers like the calving to take place in the autumn?