

Zelda Furner milks in the double-15 Germania parlor using a Gehm Copulsation milking system at Odyssey Farms in Columbia County.

Odyssey Farm likes new milkers

By Linda Goodwin

Since its unveiling last February at the New York Farm Show, several dairymen in New York state and Vermont have installed the new Copulsation milking systems.

As reported in the September 1993 issue of *New York Farmer*, Lanny Gehm invented the system, which was designed by his son, Bill, in 1989. The new pulsation technology relieved the Gehm family's 15-year fight with mastitis.

The Gehm family started using the Copulsation system on their 70-cow herd in 1992 and lowered their somatic cell count from over 800,000 to less than 200,000. In fact, the Gehms received a "Super Milk" award in 1993. The Gehms have since dispersed their herd in order to focus all their energy on promoting the new milking system.

Claiming 90 percent of everything dairymen have been told about mastitis prevention in the last 20 years is wrong, Gehm says his new milking system is a better answer to eradicating mastitis than current thoughts on improving cleanliness, vacuum levels, pre-dipping, etc.

Copulsation provides an extremely rapid, extra-gentle milking process. A Cornell extension agent, Charles C. Elrod of Seneca County, wrote, "Copulsation is a means of 'squaring off' the typical pulsation wave." By accelerating the transition from rest to milk phase and back again, there is a longer amount of time spent in whichever phase, and less time in transition between the two, he said.

It is due to the complete rest phase that Copulsation reduces teat irritation and damage, while providing 100 percent milkout.

Odyssey farm, a large herd in Columbia County recently installed a Copulsation milking system.

"The biggest thing we've seen in just the first month since installation is teat-end damage is correcting itself," said Karen Kimmel, who runs the farm together with her husband, Bob Kimmel.

Zelda Furner, who has milked at Odyssey Farm for nearly 10 years, said the cows now stand quieter during milking.

One of the key selling points to Kimmel was that Gehm was willing to bring a portable unit to the farm for a trial demonstration.

The Copulsation milking system can be used with either a pipeline or a parlor.