

BRIGHTON AREA FARMERS: FROM BEEF TO DAIRY c. 1900 (cont.)

By the end of the 19th century the size of a farmer's dairy herd was limited by the size of the barn, how much feed he could grow, the number of acres of pasture available and how many cows, he, his family and hired help could milk (by hand) twice a day.

We find that gasoline engines were used for lighting, powering milking machines, etc., by 1913 in Livingston County. This enabled a dairy herdsman to increase the number of milking cows, and therefore, the amount of milk sent to the creamery, condensing factory or milk distribution centers.

The advent of refrigerated railroad cars in the first two decades of the 20th century came about as a result of the insulation of railroad cars and the gas engine powered compressors. For a time dairy products were shipped from Brighton by rail to Detroit and other urban centers.

In order to assure that the milk purchased in the city was clean and pure many regulations related to cooling, pasteurizing, cleanliness and sanitation were imposed. Animals were tested frequently for tuberculosis, undulant fever, etc. As with most governmental regulations not all of these were accepted wholeheartedly.

After WW I trucks replaced the horse drawn wagons which had picked up the milk cans from the farm. (Huge stainless steel tankers do the job now.)

By the mid 1930s electricity was extended from the towns out to the rural areas of Livingston County. Now the farmer could shut down that gasoline driven compressor which was a continual source of concern because of the possibility of a fire.

In Brighton, in 1941, the Detroit Creamery moved into a new building on the S.W. Corner of N. Second and Advance Streets. Here the milk was tested, cooled and the cream separated. The skim milk was sold to the farmers as feed for calves and pigs. The cream was churned to butter and shipped to distribution points. Whole milk was also shipped from here for a time. (The previous location was on N. First between Cedar and Chestnut.) A. J. Southwell, Marie Borst, Fred Richmond, Eldred Bebee worked for the Detroit Creamery in various positions. (Compiled by Marieanna Bair. It would be good to include the names of other employees, just for the record. Call 229-6402. To be continued.)

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