

# Occupying a new free stall barn

## Recipe For Success

If you are building a new free stall barn, you have made or are making important decisions that you, your family, your cows and your banker have to live with for decades to come. You will have at least read a great deal of literature and talked to many people and probably travelled to see some operations to get first hand knowledge on this vast subject.

Hoards "PLAN GUIDE FOR FREE STALL SYSTEMS" states "We want to provide feeding, milking, handling and environment so the genetically superior cows are able to milk up to potential. Said another way, we don't want facilities to be the factor that limits milk production."

The following are some management tips that should be adhered to at the time of occupancy. Some of the elements of this plan must be acted upon early on in your new building program. Not all of them have to do with construction.

- All cow traffic walking surfaces should be finished smooth and flat for cow foot comfort (getting down with your bare knees on the floor is the test).
- New concrete should be flushed with a solution of 40 to 1 water to muriatic acid to neutralize the alkalinity of the floors of all cow traffic areas.  
OR new concrete surfaces can be coated with one or two coats (until water beads) of concrete floor sealer. This not only coats the floors so the hooves don't come in contact with the high PH concrete, it also protects the concrete from absorbing harmful acidic solutions such as urine (also an excellent idea on slats which all contain steel rebar for structural integrity or sand blasted, milled or planed concrete where new surfaces are exposed). Call for more information.
- Cut grooves 1/2" wide by 3/8" to 7/16" deep two ways, giving a diamond pattern to provide skid control.
- Do not trim hooves within six months of planned occupancy.
- Leave old, frail cows or cows you feel will not be able to stand the competition of the new facility.
- Be sure all construction debris has been picked up from feeding driveway alley and all cow walking surfaces. Do a walk through with the following checklist:
  - bolts, nails wire protruding from cement walls and curbs, shards of sheet metal, screws, wire etc. anywhere in feeding driveway alley, sharp stones, screws, bolts, wire and sheet metal shards in all cow traffic areas.
- Plan your cow transfer day so that you have lots of help around to move the cows in a calm orderly and safe manner.

NOTE- Cows have been lost due to one or more of the following:

grading was not completed sufficient to allow for a level unloading of the transport trailer.

- cows were entered onto feeding driveway alley.
- excited cows clambered through cable style feed mangers onto smooth concrete.

The above list probably is not complete. If you can think of any more tips that should be on it , please call us or write with your suggestions. If we can be of any assistance to you, please contact us. Thanks.

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