

MILKING

A cow makes milk in her udder, or bag, a big gland that hangs between her hind legs. The udder has four prongs, or teats, each about the size of a man's thumb. They are really tubes through which the milk oozes when the calf takes the teat in his mouth and sucks.

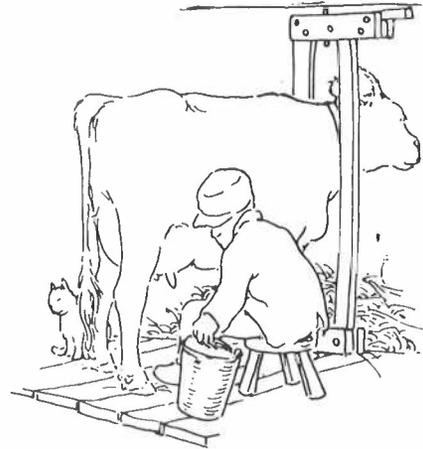
A farmer milks a cow by taking a teat in each hand and squeezing, first one, then the other, causing a small stream to squirt down into the pail held between his knees. After each squeeze, he relaxes his hand, allowing the teat to fill up with milk. Over and over, he squeezes, relaxes—squeezes, relaxes—until no more milk will come from those two teats. Then he does the same to the other two.



A good cow gives enough milk to fill a ten-quart pail. The cows didn't mind being milked. In fact, when a cow is fresh, that is when she has recently had a calf, her udder gets very full, and she feels better to have it milked out.

Milk had to be kept clean. Over the open mouth of the milk can, Father stretched a piece of cheesecloth,

which Mother scalded after each milking to make sure it was sterile. The warm milk, fresh from the cow, was poured into the can through this cloth strainer. When the can was full, it was covered and placed in a corner of the watering trough, where the cold spring water, constantly flowing, cooled it.



Every morning a neighbor who hauled milk for dairy farmers came with his big wagon and backed up to the trough. As he raised each can, he slipped a thick, felt cover, shaped to fit the can, over it to keep it cool on the way to the milk plant in town. There the cans were placed on refrigerated railroad cars and taken to the distant city of Boston. A day after the cows had given the milk, it was distributed in quart bottles to homes in the city.