New Dairy Facilities

In January, 1986, new dairy facilities were planned. The "new" wing attached to the 1908 dairy barn was also 20 years old. Everyone concerned felt a new start was necessary. A complete new wing was planned for the College's dairy science classes. A double-5 herringbone milking parlor was to be installed, automatic computer cow identification was included, automatic detachers to remove teat cups from the cow, and complete computerization of weight of milk from each cow was part of the system.

The system also had special handling and weighing rooms, state-of-the-art ventilation, and a huge above ground manure tank would store five months of manure production. Cows were fed total mixed rations. Feed was delivered from silos already in operation by self-propelled, self-unloading carts equipped with load cells and electronic scales for metering out specific rations for each cow.

The summer of 1986 brought many personnel changes to the Northwest Experiment Station. Among those who resigned, changed positions or hired were: Elvin Moran, Janet Solheim, Donna Nabben, Janet Sannes and Julie Hamre.

Elvin Moran, farm foreman, retired in August, 1986, after 39 years. Moran had been with the Station from horses to four wheel drive tractors.

October, 1986, Russell Severson, associate scientist, soil science, resigned to accept a position with the Minnesota Extension Service as county extension agent in Polk County. After Dr. Soine retired, Severson became known as the weatherman. He recorded daily weather much used by area media, weather record agencies, and commercial businesses.

"Jerome" Sirek, employed for 35 years, and Herman Gilbertson, employed for 34 years, retired from duties in the beef and sheep department in 1987.

Dale Kopecky was promoted to farm foreman March, 1987, replacing Elvin Moran.

In 1987, Dr. John Lamb started a new study at the Station to evaluate the effect of applying additional N to spring wheat during the growing season. The N was applied as a spray at three different stages of growth to wheat which had been fertilized according to a 0-2' nitrate - N soil test for 60 bushel yield goal.

Wildlife Use of Shelterbelts Studied

A two-year study was completed in 1987 at the Northwest Experiment Station by Dr. Dan Svedarsky to document wildlife use of different types of single-row shelterbelts in the Red River Valley. Wildlife values are often mentioned as a benefit of windbreak plantings but very little data had been available. Windbreak types were evaluated for summer bird use from late May to early July with incidental use by mammals also noted.

Windbreak types studied were: green ash, Siberian elm, hybrid poplar and cottonwood. Lower branches of windbreaks are commonly pruned to allow a more even distribution of snow downwind and the effect of this practice on bird use was also evaluated.

Thirty-one species of birds were regularly observed during the study with 15 species nesting in at least one windbreak type.