

MILKING MACHINES OF YESTERYEAR

**By H.A. Christensen
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The year is 1895. One of New Zealand's first milking machines has been installed on the O'Connor farm at Murchison. It is in a primitive shed. The yard and bail have earth floors. A steam engine will drive the vacuum pump.

Local farmers are assembled to witness the inaugural performance.

The cows are in the yard awaiting the big moment, when the steam engine suddenly exceeds maximum working pressure. Steam escapes with a piercing scream. The complete herd bolts, taking with it the milking machine, bails and most of the shed.

Some milking machines in New Zealand (refer to VF Issue 61):

Mehring foot milker, 1892, a treadle machine, American made and imported into New Zealand by Henry Veale of Roxburgh. Claimed to milk 20 cows per hour. Running costs 2 cents per week. Sold till about 1920.

Thomsons of Waiuku owned two milking units from 1912, milking 80 cows. Before 1910 milking by hand required six milkers. Ads in Auckland Weeklys in 1915 claim hundreds in use. The unit could milk two cows at the same time. It worked on suction with a break in the suction as there was no pulsation.

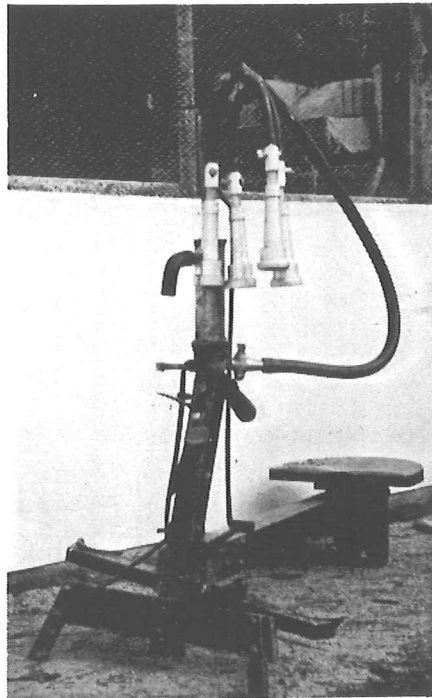
The one in the photo I got in 1971 from Palmerston North. The cups were missing from mine. I remade them from aluminium. They do not have inflations as they do today. They are held on by two rubber washers. Each cup has its own tap. The original cups were made of a type of bakelite material.

Cunningham pulsator milking machine, 1897, Brookside, the last two made by H.J.Cunningham, Christchurch. Dominion Hand Milker, Millar-Wade Automatic milker. LKG milking machine. The first sales were made in 1901-02 to W.Kirkland (East Taieri). A.Ridd (Waipuku) C.J.Gane (Normanby) W.Barton (Featherston) H.Jefferson (Nuhaka) and W.Ross and Sons (Waerenga). 8000 in use by 1932.

Gane, 1909, the first pipeline milking plant using a releaser.

Eureka, 1910, taken over by Gane 1917. Johnson-Hart 1930 taken over by Gane 1936. Ganes sold milking machines till 1965, when taken over by NDA.

Ridd 1907, invented by Ambrose Ridd (Taranaki) ceased 1964-65. AWR, 1910 (Stratford). Simplex 1910 invented by John Blake



(Otakeho, Taranaki). New Zealandia, 1910 the prototype of W.Blackmore and R.Forsyth (Christchurch), later renamed McCormick Deering.

Treloar, invented by James Treloar (Hamilton) (see story issue 58). Greenslade, invented by W.R.Greenslade (Hamilton), 1918, who also made Acme, then the Rotovac.

Warren-Farmer made by Warren Engineering 1917 (Auckland). Farmers Milking machine. Climax milking machine marketed by Wright Stephenson, 1920s. Perfect milking machine invented by C.Martin (Hamilton) 1920. Fletcher milking machine by Thomas Fletcher 1920s (Waikato). Knapp milking machine 1926 (Wairarapa). New Fidelity milking machine 1924 by Charles Laxton (Auckland). Heywood milking machine 1925 by J.E.Heywood who took over Warren-Farmer and renamed it New Departure.

Uneda-Kremo milking machine by Joseph Taylor 1924 (Eltham) ideal for small herds, made till about 1942.

Success milking machine 1925 till 1934 marketed by W.MacEwan. Direct supply milking machine made by J.Syne Read 1922 (Christchurch) later founder of rotary vacuum pump 1930s. McRea. A small company, 1925, (Hamilton).

Moffat Virtue, made in Australia 1923. OK milkers, small (Auckland) company 1929. Pilkington milking machine 1920s (Hamilton). Rotary Perfection milker 1925 designed by

Elory and Findleyson, two Wilkins Ltd workers (Invercargill) manufacture later passed to W. H. Price in 1950 (Christchurch). Rotary Protection taken over by Jack Melrose who was employed by Thomas Shield, another Invercargill company which made the Storrie milker.

Heco made by J.Stenta, late 1920s and sold as Electro. Natural Way milking machine 1929. Kaipara milking machine 1918, wearing parts guaranteed for six years. D.McI Wallace 1922 (Te Aroha) included Wallace twin cylinder vacuum pump. Ideal milking machine 1922 by R.McIntyre (Palmerston North), still going.

King Airflow milking machine 1926 by Newton King (New Plymouth). EZY milking machine 1928-29 by S.Oldfield (New Plymouth) also made Ezyboy for the one man farm.

Gordon Vacuum Break milkers 1932 (Auckland), taken over by Alfa-Laval 1969. Plymex milking machine 1933 (New Plymouth). Wybourn milking machine 1930 by John Wybourn (Te Aroha). Moorcraft Vacuum Break 1932-34 by R.M.Moorcraft (Hamilton). Lowline Vacuum break (Auckland-Hamilton). North Auckland Farmers milking machine 1935. ORB milking machine 1935 (Hamilton). Sunbeam milking machine vacuum break 1930s (Auckland).

Huthchinson Individual milker by George Hutchinson 1918 (Hawera) (see issue 71 VF). Dairy Co milking machine 1930s. Normac Trutest milker made by Northland Machinery Exchange. Alfa-Laval the largest milking machine company in the world were importing De-Laval milkers into NZ 1924. Monahan Vacuum Break Milking Unit 1942 by Tom Monahan (Murchison).

Ruakura milking machine 1953 (Ruakura). K.R.O., unknown. MacEwan Milkers originated with LKG milking machine agency in early 1900s. Robson Way Milking System 1959, lasted two years. Bodmin Nu Pulse by S.Bodman 1960s (Tauranga).

Some of the following were sold within limited regions, Egmont. Jubilee (Bay of Plenty). Flynn, Standard, Stanley, Soubrey, Auto, Hare, Judd, Hayes, Laws, Cuff, Drouledge, Victory, Lector, Sloan, Vaculac, Unity, New Era, Laws, Millar approx 1950 made by Samuel Millar (Ashburton), Hare, HIM, Zealandia, and the list could possibly carry on.

I could have included more details of the different machines' roles.

The Ridd Milking Machine

John Green



Milking Machines

by Bill Madgan

The first practical vacuum operated Milking Machine was designed by William Murchland, a plumber from Kilmarnock, and appeared on the market in Scotland in 1889. Soon after, Nicholson and Grey produced a machine, followed by the Thistle machine made by a Dr. Shields of Glasgow in 1895.

Prior to this, various mechanical milking devices had been invented, one as early as 1836, but none had been successful.

The Thistle machine soon failed, and a director of the company, Robert Kennedy, joined with William Lawrence, an engineer from Glasgow, and in 1897 produced the Lawrence Kennedy milking machine.

Machines up to this time all had single chamber teatcups, with various types of valves in the vacuum line, or at the vacuum pump, to fluctuate the vacuum in the cups, thus easing constant vacuum on the cow's teats.

Although this technique did work a better system was needed and in 1903 Alexander Gillies, a dairy man from Serang in Australia invented the double chamber teat cup. This

development was a great step forward, it was applied to the Lawrence Kennedy machine and marketed in Australia as the L.K.G. machine.

The first milking machines used in N.Z. were the Murchland machine, and the Brookside machine (similar to the Nicholson and Grey machines), both imported from Scotland in 1893.

By the turn of the century machine milking had become an accomplished fact. In N.Z., dairying was becoming established and the race was on to produce milking machines for this growing industry.

Taranaki was the birthplace of the N.Z. made machine, and by about 1907 several makes had emerged, namely the Gane, Ridd, Simplex, Eureka and others.

The Milking Machine business had its ups and downs, with some makes disappearing and others emerging. From 1910 to the end of the second World War, in excess of 36 different brands of N.Z. built machines had come and gone. By 1950 the numbers had dropped to about 5 or so, namely the Gane, McEwans (LKG), Wallace, G. V. B., Ridd and by 1964

when the Gane ceased to exist, there were only about two or three truly N.Z. designed machines still being manufactured in this country.

Milking Machines have now been in use for a considerable time, and although the first practical machines were made in Scotland about 1889, N.Z. followed soon after, and in their heyday, no fewer than 36 different N.Z. made machines were being manufactured, many with unique features used nowhere else in the world.

Sadly, most of the older N.Z. milking machine companies have disappeared, leaving only a few now operating.

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