

Developing an Elevated Milking Parlor by Steps

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Construction of a modern milking parlor is usually accompanied by a large increase in cow numbers. This is necessary to pay off the cost of the parlor. Many items found in a new milking parlor are not necessary to milk cows. Items such as pipelines, detachers, cow ID and more can improve milking rate or make the operator's job easier but are not required. Some early parlors even used bucket milkers instead of pipelines. Careful planning and a critical evaluation of what is absolutely necessary to milk cows can allow someone with fewer cows to begin using an elevated parlor. Be sure you have a long-range plan of where you are going. It's important to know what size parlor and what features you are aiming towards. This will allow you to better anticipate your needs and set priorities. Sometimes a simple elevated parlor makes sense for health reasons, even if it doesn't reduce milking time.

Consider a simple parlor and its support areas as the start of an important long-term investment. Location of the parlor to provide convenient access to existing and new cow housing areas is critical. As you add features to the parlor, the number of cows that can be conveniently milked will increase. Also, be sure to consider access by the milk truck, other farmstead traffic flow, and exposure of the parlor and holding area to cooling breezes for ventilation.

Do not cut corners on basic building construction. Select building methods and materials to assure long life and low maintenance in the harsh environment of the milking center. This will allow future funds to be spent adding features and equipment to the milking parlor, not repairing inferior building construction.

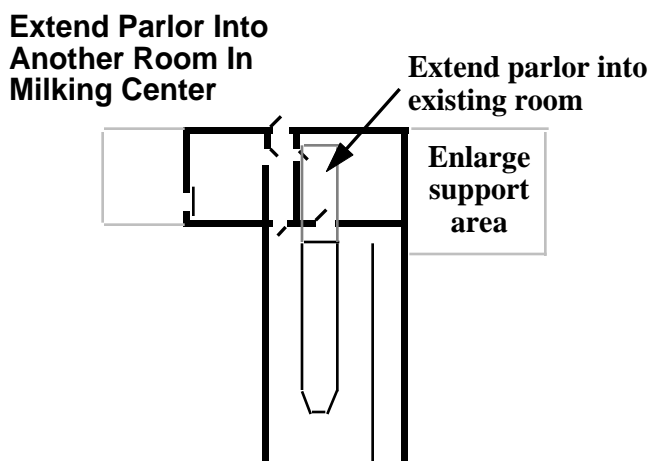
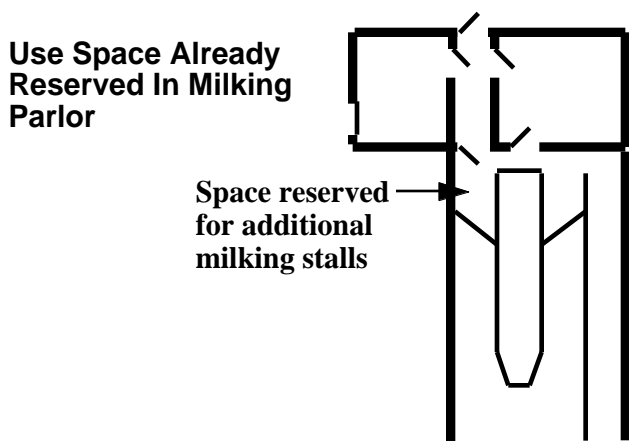
Following are some logical steps to take in trying to develop a low-cost parlor.

1. Elevated platform, simple front and rear rails, entrance and exit gates - use bucket milkers.
- ✓ Parlor hardware can be new, secondhand or homemade.
- ✓ Do not scrimp on building shell or concrete work.
- ✓ Milk can be carried to existing milkhouse.
- ✓ Have a plan for expansion and/or adding other features.
- ✓ Plan for adequate utilities - electricity, water, wastewater drains, heat and ventilation.
2. Add dumping station.
3. Install milk pipeline and pulsator line over operator area, swing units from side to side.
 - ✓ Utilize pipeline from your existing tie stall, or purchase from dealer, private sale, or at auction.
 - ✓ Weigh jars and/or rope-pull automatic detachers can be located in the middle of the operator area. They will interfere some with operator travel.
4. Install low line and units for each side.
 - ✓ Requires new receiver assembly or secondhand unit from another parlor. Wall-mounted pump assemblies used in tie stall barns are usually not adaptable to parlor situations.
 - ✓ If it is desired to switch units from side to side, use stall cocks on milk line, and place pulsators over middle of the operator area.
5. Add automatic detachers.
 - ✓ Will allow a decrease in number of operators.
6. Add manual or powered crowd gate.
7. Increase number of stalls by lengthening parlor.

- 8. Add milk weight readout equipment (meters or weigh jars).
- ✓ Regular hand entry of milk weights is usually not successful. One meter can be moved from stall to stall to check the occasional cow's production.
- 9. Add power entrance and exit gates with parlor controls.

- 10. Add cow indexing.
- 11. Add automatic cow identification and automatic milk weight recording.
- 12. Add automatic sorting gate(s).
- 13. Add in-line sensors for milk quality.

Milking Center Floor Plans



These illustrations suggest how various floor plans for simple milking centers can be expanded to accommodate larger parlors and additional support areas. It is challenging to expand a parlor and still maintain a regular milking schedule. Extra labor may be necessary to help with milking during the construction project. Evaluate the extra costs and hassles of expanding an existing parlor with the costs of relocation and new construction.

