Watered Milk from Magic Cans

The size of the wheels permitted them to travel the often muddled and rutted streets of New Orleans without bogging down. The speed of their horses permitted them and their drivers to get away from inspectors trying to obtain samples of the products being sold.

"Courts ruled that inspectors must produce samples of adulterated milk to gain convictions of dairymen accused of selling watered milk," says Dr. Grisby. "The inspectors were furnished horses from the pound. These animals were notoriously slow; dairymen using the chariots could outrun them."

"This situation was resolved in 1910, when the city passed an ordinance slapping a 30-day jail sentence on dairymen convicted of running away from inspectors," Grisby said.

These bits of information about the dairy industry which served New Orleans in past years are included in Dr. Grisby's doctoral thesis which he wrote on the history of this city's dairy industry. He received a doctor of philosophy degree from Harvard University.

Dr. Grisby points out his thesis was not written to criticize the pioneer dairymen.