

ATOMIC MILK:

Emergency at Windscale Atom Plant - and the milk from 200 square miles of farmland is condemned as radioactive. But for these filter-tops - once nicknamed "Cockcroft's Folly" because Sir John Cockcroft insisted on them - farms much farther away would have faced, not emergency, but disaster. Now the worst seems to be over - though Mr. Stan Ritsen, who helped to bring Windscale's overheated reactor under control, was radioactive for four days and couldn't even kiss his wife till Geiger counters gave permission. The farmers carry on as usual - for cows have to be milked, whatever happens to the milk afterwards. You can't explain radioactivity to a cow.

Milk Marketing Board lorries collect the contaminated milk. The trouble arose when radioactive dust from the overheated pile fell on the Cumberland pastures, and milk samples rushed to Harwell were found to contain six times as much radioactive iodine as international health standards permit. So for the time being - down the drain it goes.

Meanwhile, emergency supplies from outside are delivered to more than 5,000 people who normally get their milk from the banned farms. Experts believe the danger is already past - but until they're quite sure, the ban stays. With atoms, you can't be too careful!