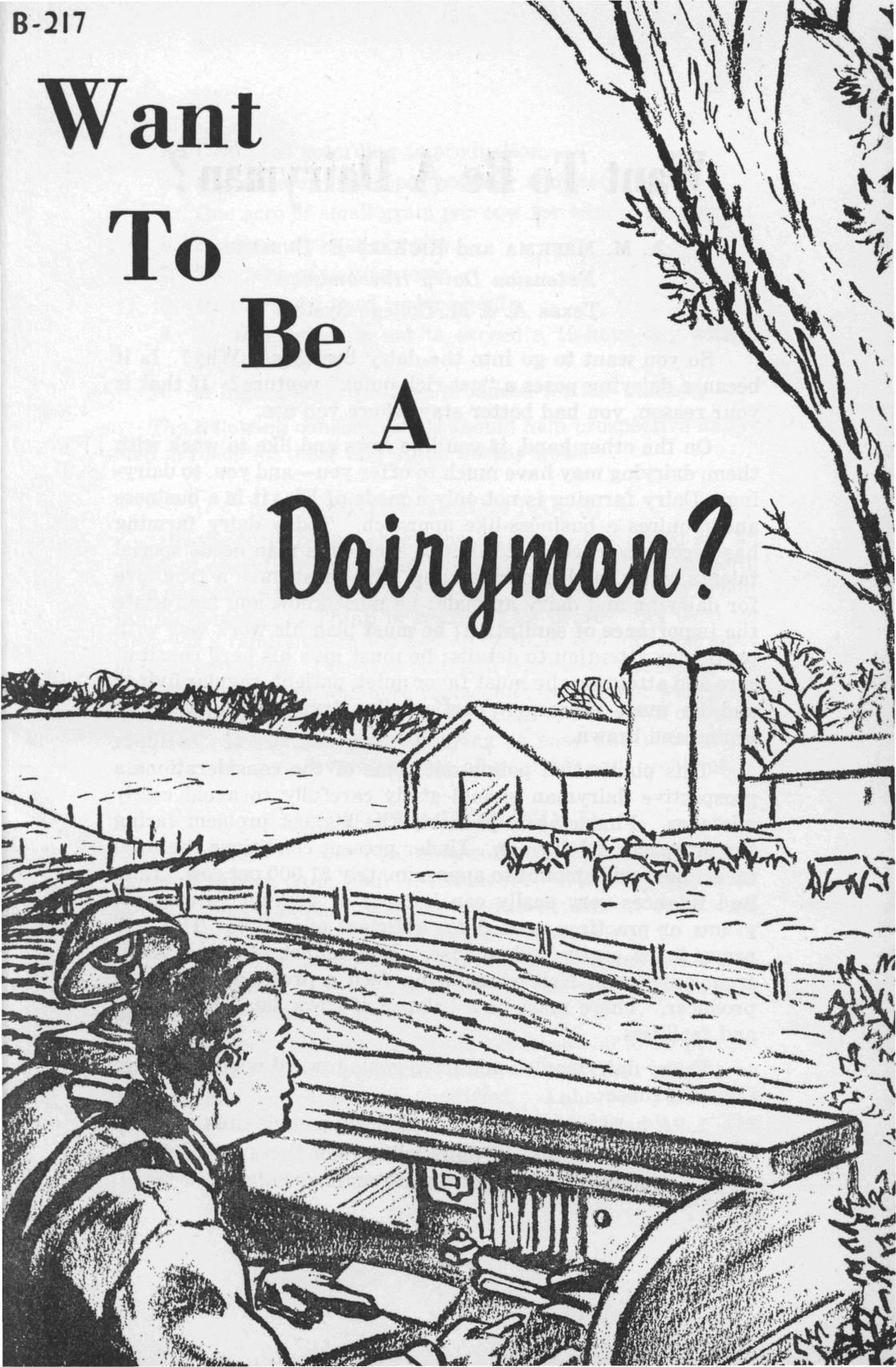


Want To Be A Dairyman?



Want To Be A Dairyman ?

A. M. MEEKMA and RICHARD E. BURLESON

Extension Dairy Husbandmen

Texas A. & M. College System

So you want to go into the dairy business! Why? Is it because dairying poses a "get-rich-quick" venture? If that is your reason, you had better stay where you are.

On the other hand, if you like cows and like to work with them, dairying may have much to offer you—and you, to dairying. Dairy farming is not only a mode of life; it is a business and requires a business-like approach. Today dairy farming has become so specialized that to succeed, a man needs special talents, skills, and understanding. He must have a true love for dairying and dairy animals; he must know and appreciate the importance of sanitation; he must plan his work well with particular attention to details; he must give his herd constant care and attention; he must favor quiet, patient, regular living; and he must possess a particularly strong combination of brains and brawn.

This publication points out some of the considerations a prospective dairyman should study carefully to avoid costly mistakes. Financing is probably the biggest problem facing the prospective dairyman. Under present conditions the total investment will amount to approximately \$1,000 per cow. Limited finances very easily can hamper or prevent future programs or practices needed for efficient operation. This will prove to be costly and unwise. You cannot starve a profit from any cow. Neither can you feed a profit out of a low producer. There must be a balance of cows, land, feed, labor and facilities.

Every dairyman should have goals toward which to work. Consider these:

1. A herd average of at least 8,000 pounds milk per cow.
2. First 20 pounds of daily milk production from each cow produced from pasture and roughage only.

3. Grain fed according to production.
4. One acre of sudan per cow for summer grazing.
5. One acre of small grain per cow for winter grazing.
6. Six tons of silage per cow.
7. Two tons of hay per cow.
8. Home-raised herd replacements.
9. A labor schedule not to exceed a 10-hour day with a regular day off.
10. A high quality product produced for the market.

The following considerations should help prospective dairy-men in reaching these and other worthy goals.

CONSIDERATION NO. I.

On the form below, check the investment required for an efficient operation making adjustments to fit the size of herd. It is doubtful whether a 12 or 15-cow herd can be an efficient family operation. Think in terms of 20 or 40: At least 20 cows for a family operation and 40 or more if additional labor is to be employed. Consider land and equipment necessary for pasture, hay, silage, and herd replacements. Do not worry too much about producing grain feeds. Plan to cut down on labor required. If you can make dairying as easy and pleasant as possible, you have overcome one of your biggest problems.

CONSIDERATION NO. II.

Check now on your possibilities for making money. What can you expect from your investment? With the following guide, estimate your annual income and expenses. A production of 6,000 pounds of milk per cow should not be out of your reach. The average for the state is 3,300 and the DHIA average is 6,800. Calves are valued at one week of age as a shortcut in estimating income.

Remember that feed alone will represent 50 to 60 percent of your total cost of producing milk. Thus, your efforts on pasture and roughages are justified. Labor is your next biggest cost. Again, consider a labor-saving plan. The depreciation on buildings, equipment, and cows may vary. These percentages are acceptable for most uses.

**SUGGESTED INVESTMENT
FOR
A 40-COW GRADE A DAIRY FARM**

Land and Buildings	Number	Local Cost
Land, acres (inc. residence)	250	_____
Milking Barn (12-stall stanchion barn or 4-stall parlor)	1	_____
Shelter and Hay Barn (40' x 125', pole-type)	1	_____
Calf Barn (12' x 36' shed)	1	_____
Equipment shed (15' x 50')	1	_____
Bull shed (10' x 14')	1	_____
Maternity shed (10' x 14')	1	_____
Silo (250 tons)	1	_____
 Equipment and Machinery		
Pickup truck	1	_____
Tractor, two-row with crop equip- ment	1	_____
Manure spreader	1	_____
Hay baler	1	_____
Mower	1	_____
Rake	1	_____
Trailer, 2-wheel	1	_____
Ensilage harvester	1	_____
Milking machine units	2-4	_____
Milk cooler	1	_____
Water heater	1	_____
Can hoist	1	_____
Can rack	1	_____
Milk cans	25	_____
Wash vats	2	_____
Milking cart	1	_____
Miscellaneous items (strainer, brushes, etc.)		_____
 Cows	 40	 _____
Total Capital Investment		_____

(Fill out by getting local bids and cost figures)

ESTIMATED ANNUAL INCOME AND EXPENSES

Gross Income	Amount	Local Value
Milk (6,000 lbs. per cow @ prevailing price)	_____	_____
Calves (valued at one week of age)	_____	_____
Total Gross Income	_____	_____

Expenses

Feed (Figure hay, silage and pasture at farm cost and concentrates at market value)		
Hay, tons (1½ tons per cow)	_____	_____
Silage, tons (3 tons per cow)	_____	_____
Concentrates, tons (1 ton per cow)	_____	_____
Pasture	_____	_____
Labor (hired)	_____	_____
Breeding fees	_____	_____
Veterinary and miscellaneous	_____	_____
Taxes, Insurance, and Interest	_____	_____
Total Expenses	_____	_____

Return to Capital and Family Labor

Gross Income (above)	_____	_____
Total Expenses (above)	_____	
Depreciation:		
Buildings (5%)	_____	
Equipment and machinery (10%)	_____	
Cows (20%)	_____	
Total Deductions	_____	_____
Return to Capital and Family Labor		_____

CONSIDERATION NO. III.

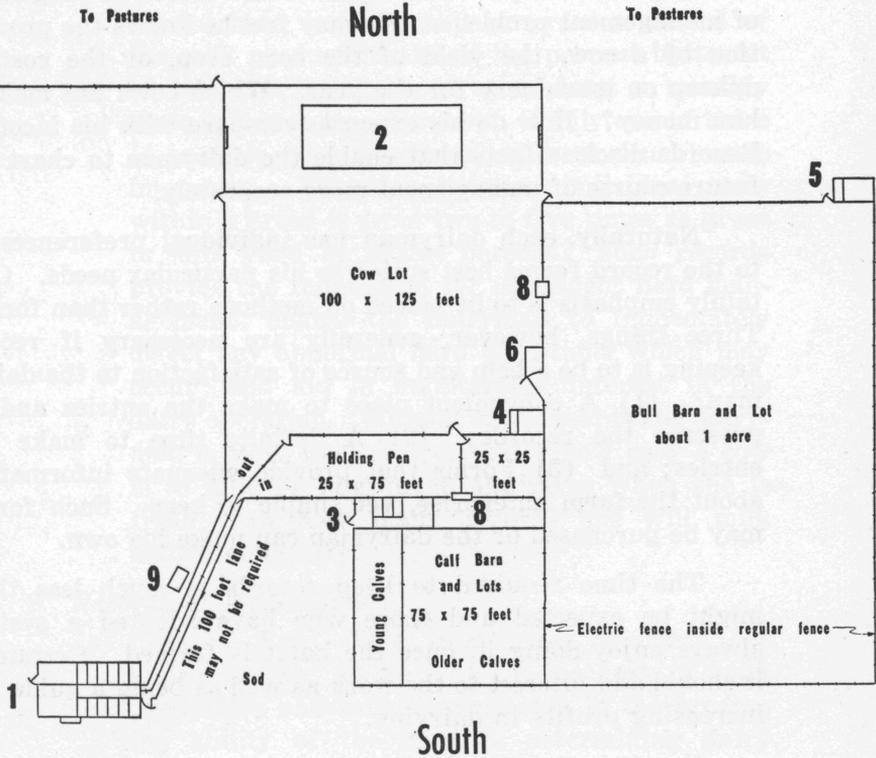
Before beginning actual construction work, you should consider an overall plan for a Grade A dairy layout such as the one on the next page. This is a guide only to show possible building and lot arrangements and how the unit as a whole may fit together. Drainage, prevailing winds, local and state health requirements all must be calculated. Travel distances of the herd and labor should be kept to a minimum.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

When you are ready for action, you should:

1. Be sure of a market for your milk. Check on base requirements.
2. Visit other dairymen to gain the benefit of their experiences.
3. Check with local and state health officials as to type and location of milking barn and other health requirements.
4. Plan the layout of your headquarters unit as well as the fencing of your pastures.
5. Arrange for financing if needed.
6. Get your construction program underway.
7. Have a year's supply of roughage on hand if possible. If hay is to be purchased, get it during harvest season.
8. Decide on the breed best suited to your program.
9. Obtain your foundation herd, paying special attention to freedom from brucellosis and mastitis.
10. Provide a good herd sire or arrange for artificial breeding.
11. Make long-time plans for pasture improvement and roughage production.
12. Set up a system of herd records.

SUGGESTED GRADE A DAIRY LAYOUT (40 Cows)



1. 12-stall stanchion barn or 4-stanchion parlor.
2. Shelter and hay barn, 40' x 125', pole-type, center storage.
3. Calf barn, 12' x 36' shed, individual stalls and tie stanchions.
4. 10' x 14' maternity shed and lot, 25' x 25'.
5. 10' x 14' bull shed.
6. Breeding chute.
7. Equipment shed, 15' x 50'.
8. Water troughs.
9. Manure spreader and/or pit.
10. Residence.
11. Garage.

ADEQUATE RECORDS SHOW THE WAY

Record Keeping is the foundation of any successful, well-balanced dairy operation. Too often the dairyman proceeds blindly year after year making the same errors in judgement of management problems. He may feel he knows the production of a cow, the yield of the corn crop, or the cost of upkeep on machinery for the year. Which cows are making him money? How do his expenses compare with his income? Records disclose facts that enable the dairyman to chart his future course of management more accurately.

Naturally, each dairyman has individual preferences as to the record forms best suited to his particular needs. Certainly emphasis is to be placed on methods rather than forms. Three things, however, generally are necessary if record keeping is to be a help and source of satisfaction to the dairyman: (1) A convenient place to make the entries and to preserve the records; (2) A definite time to make the entries; and (3) Forms that provide adequate information about the farm enterprise, yet simple to keep. Such forms may be purchased or the dairyman can make his own.

The time required to keep records is much less than might be expected and those who have adopted a system always enjoy doing it, once the habit is formed. Certainly, it should add interest to the work as well as being a guide for increasing profits in dairying.

No attempt is made to enumerate the many phases of dairying on which the keeping of and the analysis of records play a vital part in a successful dairy business. However, attention should be given to a few of the more important records, especially those that require almost daily study.

1. *Records of Performance*

- (a) **Breeding and Calving Records**—If the dairy cow is to produce at her best, she must be given a dry period of six to eight weeks in which to rebuild her body. Unless the breeding date is known, some cows will be milked too long while others will be turned dry too soon. Also, the exact date

of expected calving is important so that the cow may be fed and cared for properly before and at the time of calving.

- (b) **Production Records**—In order to conduct a successful herd improvement program a record of the milk production and of the percent butterfat of each cow in the herd on at least a monthly basis is necessary. However, if only one of these is possible, the pounds of milk is much more important. Variation between individual cows within a breed is from two to five times as great in milk yield as in fat percent. Such records provide the foundation for intelligent herd management; enable the dairyman to immediately detect any abnormal herd conditions which may occur; and aid in maintaining interest in the dairy operation. Without such records the dairyman is more likely to remember how easy a cow is to milk or how much she gives when she is fresh than how many months she will milk before going dry.

2. *Records of Expenditures*

- (a) **Cost of Feed**—This item alone accounts for approximately 50 percent of the cost of milk production and ranks second only to the producing ability of the herd in determining dairy profits.
- (b) **Cost of Labor**—Many factors enter into labor costs on the dairy farm. A great deal depends on the dairyman himself. Two dairymen, with the same number of cows producing practically the same amount of milk, seldom spend the same time in care of the herd. Labor costs may be reduced greatly by using efficient equipment conveniently arranged; practicing improved methods; and eliminating unnecessary work.
- (c) **Cost and Upkeep of Machinery**—The size of the herd, production returns, and labor costs largely

determine whether or not the purchase of new machinery is justified. Generally, the labor saved by a good piece of equipment justifies the expense, when a high producing herd is maintained. On the other hand, if an expensive piece of equipment is seldom used, its purchase may not be wise.

- (d) Cost of Maintaining Soil Fertility
- (e) Taxes and Insurance
- (f) Building Depreciation and Replacement
- (g) Cost of Herd Replacements

Dairymen realize that all these expenses must be met before any profit can be had.

3. *Records of Credits or Income*

- (a) Milk
- (b) Calves
- (c) Manure

The dairyman cannot profit or realize much pleasure from the results of his labor unless, like any successful businessman, he takes inventory, maps out a course to follow and proceeds to execute his carefully thought-out plan. Unforeseen circumstances will doubtless change the outcome, but at least he will be far nearer his goal with a plan or budget than he would be without one. The personal satisfaction that he and his family receive from such planning will be reward beyond mere dollars and cents. Also, at the end of each year the dairyman can determine what "low" factors in his plans cut down profits and can take steps to eliminate these factors another year. *The dairyman who follows a well-marked "road map" will arrive at his goal much quicker and with fewer disappointments.*

See Your Local County Extension Agents For Other Publications Related to Dairying

Breeding

- L-58 Artificial Insemination of Dairy Cattle
- D-317 Breeding and Calving Record

Feeding

- B-69 Feeding and Care of the Dairy Herd
- B-186 Silage for the Dairy Herd
- C-135 Minerals and Vitamins for Dairy Cattle
- C-238 Balanced Dairy Feeding
- C-286 A Forage Program For The Dairy Herd
- C-328 Concrete Lined Trench Silos
- Blueprint No. 345 Cattle Hay Rack
- Blueprint No. 356 Mineral Trough

Management

- B-59 Dairy Barn Plans
- B-178 Raising Dairy Calves
- C-284 Developing Dairy Heifers
- C-287 Control of Stomach Worms and Liver Flukes in Cattle and Sheep
- C-290 A Milking Procedure for the Dairy Herd
- C-292 Mastitis and Its Control
- C-302 Producing Quality Milk
- C-324 Guide for Controlling External Parasites of Livestock and Poultry
- C-325 Reproductive Failures In Dairy Cows
- L-77 Anaplasmosis of Cattle
- L-117 Coccidiosis in Cattle and Sheep
- L-150 Grass Tetany of Cattle
- L-180 Prevent Bloat In Cattle and Sheep
- Blueprint No. 366 Calf Barn
- Blueprint No. 373 Hay Storage and Loafing Shed
- Blueprint No. 395 Four Stall Milking Parlor

Milk and Milk Products

- B-141 Cottage Cheese and Processed Cottage Cheese
- C-210 Better Milk for Better Meals
- C-228 Neufchatel Cheese
- C-234 Home Pasteurization of Milk

