

David Lapp Describes Life In New Zealand

Ed. Note: This is the second in a series of excerpts from a letter written by David Lapp, son of Mr. and Mrs. John Lapp, Bareville R1. David is spending six-months in New Zealand as an exchange student in the 4-H International Farm Youth Exchange program. He is writing about the dairy farm of his host family.

They have quite good pasture, a mixture of meadow grasses which they call rye and clover. The clover causes quite a problem in wet weather. It isn't uncommon to lose two or three cows a year with bloat. Until recently they did not know how to control the bloat. Then they discovered they could do so by spraying each pasture with peanut oil

before they pasture it. This becomes rather expensive, so they usually just shut this pasture off to the cows until the bloat scare is over.

On this farm of 240 acres they had 140 milking cows which were Jerseys, and 60 yearlings which they were



David Lapp

breeding at the time. On the milking cows, they use artificial insemination. They are all bred during a period of six weeks. This makes it possible for the farmer to have them all calve about the

same time, giving him two months out of the year when they are all 'dry. This is usually during their winter.

They also had 60 calves which they are feeding on grass alone. They are very healthy, in spite of the fact that I was told in Lancaster County we have to feed our calves on hay and grain until they are at least 10 months old.

Each farmer tries to work for a cow and a half to the acre, and as much butter fat as he can get. Milk goes for cheese and butter, which are second only to wool in exports. So they try to get as much fat off each acre as possible. On the farm I stayed, they got the average of 29 pounds of milk per cow per day in the two weeks I stayed there. This gave them a total of 4,000 pounds per day. This is the spring of their year, and they thought they were doing fairly good. For all you Holstein Breeders in the county, I sure tried my best to sell them the breed, but they just laughed at me. I told them that we get 400 to 600 pounds of fat per cow, compared to their 300 pound average. They told me that they used to have some Holsteins but found they can only pasture three per acre, whereas they could pasture four or five Jerseys. They are, how-

ever, doing quite a bit of cross breeding between Holsteins and Jerseys.

Another thing I thought was quite interesting was the price they get for milk. They just get \$1.25 to \$1.50 a hundred. They also get paid by butter fat content; so they would complain when they got their check from the factory saying they just got a 42 test. I asked them, since they are a co-op, and each farmer has a vote in their factory, why they don't do something about it. They didn't know.

Since their milk goes for cheese, they don't have such a stiff inspection, but if they are found to be shipping milk with mastitis they get stopped. They cool their milk only by running it over cold water pipes, then into a milk can. They are starting to get stainless steel tanks, but the milk is still cooled the same way, then pumped into the tank.

When I told them what we get for our milk, they said it sounds all right, but wondered why we have so much surplus. Another thing he said was why we have such a high overhead and need the money to run our expensive equipment. Here I talked up and said that I think they could have twice as many cows if they would

put them on a dry lot and chop all the grass and bring it to the cows. To this he said, "We already produce more butter and cheese than we can sell on the world market for a good price."

They pay the equivalent of 24¢ a pound for butter and 12¢ for a loaf of bread in the stores. He said until they get more markets and the Common Market gets started, it wouldn't pay them to buy the heavy machinery.

I had to appreciate my host father very much, because together I believe we learned quite a bit, even though we can't do much about solving the many problems the world has. Sometimes we thought we came up with some good ideas.

Buying Avocados

You may find avocados displayed in stores in two ways — firm, and soft, ready-to-eat, explains Harold Neigh, Penn State extension consumer economics specialist. Firm fruit must be left at room temperature until it is soft, and this may take two to four days. Ready-to-eat fruit is conditioned ahead of time to use at once. The flesh of this fruit is delicate. To test for softness, hold the fruit in the palm of your hand, and if it feels soft to the touch it is ready to eat.

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