

Dairying's Dividing Line

An invisible line in dairying divides the industry's expanding and contracting sectors.

This line, as closely as it can be pinpointed, is the \$20,000 gross sales mark.

On the \$20,000-plus side of the line were 68,800 commercial dairy farms in 1964 — 27,500 more than in 1959.

On the minus side of \$20,000 lay 298,300 farms — 88,800 less than in 1959. The greater part of the farms missing from this sector had gone out of commercial dairying. But there were many which vanished — simply to reappear as larger farms on the other side of dairying's dividing line.

Here, in a little more detail, are some facts which emerged about commercial dairy farms from the 1964 agricultural census.

Farms with less than \$2,500 in gross farm sales. This group of farms is not simply shrinking in number. It's virtually disappearing.

The 17,700 such farms that were in operation in 1964 represented fewer than 5 percent of all commercial dairy operations and sold only 0.5 percent of all the milk and cream.

With herd sizes averaging seven milk cows and sales of dairy products worth only \$1,000 per farm, these operations were existing on borrowed time—until they either got out or grew up in size.

Farms with \$2,500 to \$5,000 in sales. Though commercial farms in this group made up roughly 16 percent of the U.S. total, they accounted for only about 4 percent of milk and cream marketings in 1964. Their numbers, too, were dropping fast.

Typically, herds numbered 12 milk cows and the value of dairy products marketed came to about \$2,700 per farm.

Farms with \$5,000 to \$10,000 in sales. In this group were roughly 28 percent of America's commercial dairy farms. On the average, herds included 21 milk cows and dairy sales per farm were at about \$5,400.

Though better off than their smaller counterparts, these farms were still losing ground in dairying. They accounted for only about 15 percent of total milk and cream marketings in 1964, compared with 25 percent in 1959. Their numbers shrank by nearly a third during the same period.

Farms with \$10,000 to \$20,000 in sales. This group of farms (which touched the borderline of the expanding sector of commercial dairying) increased by a scant 3 percent during 1959-64. In the longrun, however, the number of farms in this group will probably contract.

Roughly one-third of all commercial dairy farms and one third of all milk and cream sales were represented by these \$10,000 to \$20,000-sales farms. Herd sizes averaged 31 milk cows and the value of dairy sales about \$10,600 per farm.

Farms with \$20,000 to \$40,000 in sales. The ranks of such farms swelled by 63 percent between 1959 and 1964, placing this group securely in dairying's expanding sector.

Such farms represented about 14 percent of all commercial dairy operations in the United States and accounted for roughly 26 percent of total milk and cream sales.

Herd sizes typically ran to about 50 cows and sales of dairy products averaged \$20,200 per farm.

Farms with \$40,000 or more in sales. At this sales summit were some 15,500 commercial dairy farms — about 4 percent of the

U.S. total. However, they accounted for nearly 22 percent of total milk and cream marketings in 1964.

With large herds — roughly 130 milk cows—and dairy product sales valued at \$68,900 per farm, these farms were at the top of the heap in commercial dairying. Their numbers gained by 81 percent between 1959 and 1964.

What about the future? Commercial dairy farms with annual sales of \$20,000 and over will continue to grow in number and will account for an increasing proportion of U.S. milk output.

On the other hand, there are likely to be somewhat fewer dairy farms with sales of \$10,000 to \$20,000, and sharply lower numbers of dairy farms with sales less than \$10,000. Some farmers with these lower levels,

of sales will expand operations to increase income, but probably a larger proportion will leave dairying as they find better alternative opportunities.

The story of the men who run commercial dairy farms is also worth telling.

Census statistics indicated that the average commercial dairy farmer's age was about 48 years, compared with about 49 years for operators of all types of commercial farms. Operators with larger herds tended to be substantially younger than those with smaller herds. About 13 percent of commercial dairy farm operators were less than 35 years old in 1964.

About one-third of all commercial dairymen worked off the farm at some time during 1964. What they earned from off-farm sources (including government

Pa. Broiler Placements Up Six Percent

Placements of broiler chicks in the Commonwealth during the week ending October 26 was 842,000. The placements were 3% above the previous week and 6% above the same week a year earlier. Average placements during the past 10 weeks were up 5% from a year

earlier. Settings for broiler chicks was 1,647,000 — 6% above the previous week and 9% above the comparable period a year earlier. The current 3-week total of eggs set is 12% higher than the same period in 1967. Inshipments of broiler type chicks during the past 10 weeks averaged 13,500 — 12% from the comparable period in 1967. Outshipments averaged 241,100 during the past 10 weeks, 23% higher than a year earlier.

22 STATES: Placements in the 22 States totaled 42,384,000 — down 10% from the previous week but up 3% from the same week a year earlier. Average placements during the past 10 weeks were 3% above 1967. Settings were 64,927,000 — up 3% from the previous week and up 5% from a year earlier. The current 3-week total of eggs set is 2% above the comparable period in 1967.

Ownership patterns varied markedly by the scale of the dairy operation. Full owners predominated in commercial dairying, viewed as a whole. Part owners, however, ran most of the farms in the dairy industry's expanding sector.

Just because it's a well-beaten road is no sign it's the right one.



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It's in the milk pail where the results of good feeding really show. How the milk gets in the pail depends largely on the roughage, grains and supplements you use to help the cows produce it.

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