

Juggling, Ayrshires

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door with their milk cans and poured the milk into pitchers or whatever containers the customers had. In 1922, he sold the milk delivery routes, but then in 1929, when the Depression came along, he started up again. At that time, we delivered raw milk for a retail price of eight cents a quart."

Retail deliverymen sold Spruce Villa milk from 1929 until 1964, when the routes were sold to Moore Dairies. At that time, Brubaker had already been operating a retail store for about four years, and after 11 years of full-time juggling, he is satisfied with his lot.

"Juggling makes a lot more sense for the small dealer," Brubaker said.

"Home deliveries are just getting too expensive. Even the larger companies are finding it hard to keep on with home deliveries, and in most big cities nobody delivers anymore..."

"One of the problems is that people aren't home during the day. More and more housewives are working, so they're not there anymore to bring the milk in out of the cold or the heat. Collections can be a big problem, too. Here in Lancaster County we have a fairly stable population and honest people, but some places a milkman can take real losses on home deliveries. We're still going to have retail routes for a while yet, but I think the milkman is eventually going

to go the way of the bread man. The small dairies, the ones with one to six routes, just can't make it."

As evidence of his feelings, Brubaker pointed to the Lancaster County Dairymen's Association and Bottle Exchange. In the 1930's, he said, this group had some 70 members. That figure has dwindled steadily until today there are fewer than 10 members.

Brubaker feels there's plenty of room in the market for the jugger. He sells the entire output of his 50-cow milking herd for \$1.20 a gallon, or about \$14.40 a hundred before deducting selling expenses. "My biggest problem isn't so much in selling the milk," he said, "it's in having enough

to sell."

Customers regularly stop in at the tiny Spruce Villa outlet to pick up their milk. Some stop two or three times a week on their way home from work. Some stop once a week and buy eight to ten gallons at a time. Spruce Villa milk is sold in half-gallon and gallon glass bottles. Deposits are collected on the bottles - 25 cents for the half-gallon size and 40 cents for the gallon - so that the amount of capital Brubaker has tied up in bottles is virtually nil.

In the past three years, juggling operations throughout the state have grown from about 200 to 250. There are presently nine in Lancaster County, with another two dairy farmers seriously thinking about starting up.

Under the Pennsylvania Milk Marketing Law, a jugger must produce, process and sell his own milk on his own premises in order to be exempt from the minimum pricing regulations set by the Milk Marketing Board. Juggers must meet the same sanitation standards set for regular commercial dairies. Juggling has grown considerably in recent years, but may not expand quite as fast in the years just ahead, Brubaker commented.

"When we started juggling, dairy farmers were getting paid \$3.50 a hundred for their milk. And it cost us about \$25,000 to set up our processing plant. Today, if a farmer has to build a store and a plant both, he'll be investing close to \$100,000 in the business. And with milk pushing \$10 a hundred, I don't know how many farmers would want to put that kind of money into juggling."

Another factor that could turn some farmers off the idea of juggling is that retailing tends to tie down the retailer just as dairying ties down the dairyman. And when the dairyman is his own retailer, he's really tied down. The Spruce Villa store hours are 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, 9:00 to 7:00 on Saturday, and 4:00 to 7:00 on Sunday.

A long-time figure in dairy youth activities, Brubaker is a strong believer in hiring young people both in his store and in the processing plant. He has local high school girls working in the

store every night. He has enough of a labor force so that each attendant works only one or two nights a week. And he hires high school boys to help in the processing. "I'm a great believer in giving kids something to do. A part-time job gets them used to working, it gives them a chance to earn some money, so they'll know what it is to earn it and so they'll learn how to handle it."

Brubaker also devotes time to the Lancaster County Ayrshire, Brown Swiss and Jersey 4-H Club, where he's been a leader for the past 20 years.

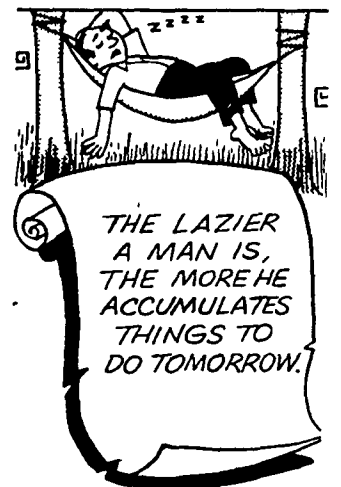
Farm operations - milking, planting, harvesting, etc. - are handled under contract by a young farmer. It's an arrangement which Brubaker feels enables a younger man to get into farming gradually. Brubaker owns the farm and the cattle, he pays the taxes and repairs and buys all the fertilizer and lime.

The farmer owns the farm equipment, and gets a percentage of both the milk production and the calf crop. Management is a joint effort between Brubaker and his contract farmer.

Ayrshires have been a Spruce Villa mainstay ever since 1934. "Before that, we just had cows," Brubaker

said: "Mostly grade Holsteins but a few others, too. We decided to go to Ayrshires back then because milk was sold on the basis of its cream content. Our routemen could go to a housewife and say, 'Look at how much more cream our milk has. Don't you think you ought to buy it?' Today, with homogenization, that's not so important. But I still like Ayrshires, and I think there's a place for all the colored breeds. With Ayrshires, I think you can make more money from an acre of feed than you can with any other breed. And to me, that's what's important."

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