



Getting calves and heifers in their places is all in a day's work for Nona Schwartzbeck on the farm she and husband Joe own west of Baltimore, Maryland.

Dairy keeps him busy

Dawn finds the workday of Joe and Nona Schwartzbeck already two hours old as the young Maryland couple move their herd of nearly 90 dairy cows on the first of two daily trips through the milking parlor.

Across America, another 300,000 dairy farmers, under 300,000 different circumstances, have started their days also. Within hours, 3½ million gallons of milk and milk products will be delivered to children and their parents in cities, large and small, across the country.

Dairying ties people down. The cows have to be milked twice a day, 365 days a year. Between milkings there's what most folks would consider a full day's work. Depending on the season, it's either planting corn, making hay, or harvesting grain. Repairing and cleaning equipment. Tending the animals. Plowing to raise a new crop of feed.

And dairying takes a big investment. The average family dairy operation has more cows than one of a generation ago. And more mechanization. Expensive mechanization. The Schwartzbecks have five tractors, seven hay wagons, three silage wagons, two trucks, and various planters, mulchers, lifters, spreaders, dryers, balers, and rakes. Altogether—land,

buildings, animals, and equipment—they have about \$300,000 invested in dairying. While this is above the national average of \$175,000 total investment on a U.S. dairy farm, it is representative of the future direction many dairymen will be going.

Why do people stay in dairying where the investment and risks are high, the hours are long, and work goes on 365 days a year?

They stay, they say, because it's a way of life, not a job. A good way of life. They like

working for themselves. They think it's a good way to bring up kids. But no matter how they feel about the virtues of the lifestyle, they have to make a living at dairying in order to stay. If they can't make a living, they have to quit and go into something else. And that will mean less milk and milk products coming into cities.

Many, like the Schwartzbecks, find that by using their income to pay interest on their indebtedness for land and equipment, by nibbling away at their mortgage, they some day expect to be able to pass on a considerable equity to their children—depending on the weather, good management, and adequate prices for their milk.

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