

Second in a series of interviews with Glenn Shirk

Glenn Shirk talks dairy management

BY PAT KAUFFMAN
LANCASTER — Last week we looked at the traits and personality of an outstanding dairyman. One of those traits, a business mind, referred to the ability of an individual dairyman to manage his operation.

In today's second installment, we're taking a closer look at dairy

management via an in-depth interview with Lancaster dairy agent, Glenn Shirk.

Glenn, when you think of dairy management, what heads the list?

The first thing you must remember, Pat, is that dairying is a business. And in any business, to achieve success you must establish goals. Failure to set goals is

like a football huddle. Without a game plan, the play won't get off the ground.

When setting goals, the dairyman will have business (dairy) goals and family goals. The two must be compatible. And additionally, the goals must be realistic. Failure to set realistic goals puts too much

strain on the team, the family.

Such things as how much time a family wants to spend together, how much work and responsibility the family wants the children to have as a growing experience, what standard of living the family hopes to achieve, and when they hope to achieve that standard are all important to

the goals set. But the family should take top priority

Success depends on realistic goals, goals the

"To achieve success you must establish goals..."

when setting goals. Business goals are then used to target the family in the direction of the family goals.

whole family believes in, and whether those goals are being achieved. For instance, often there are hidden goals. Perhaps one spouse has always secretly wanted to manage a big operation, or have the top herd in the county. Frequently these hidden goals are not dealt with in the family discussion. And often the dairyman doesn't stop to ask himself if he wants what he thinks he wants. Sometimes financial or business success may mean family hardship.

In some instances, setting family goals that are compatible with business goals may mean early sacrifices, such as using used tractors rather than new ones and holding off on the purchase of household appliances to build up the dairy so that it can later support the family living standards.

In other cases, it may mean achieving a certain size operation to maintain a desired standard of living. This may mean deciding for instance that he'd like to have the weekends off, and planning his operation to a size that can support a full-time partner with whom he can alternate weekends.

In some cases, successful dairymen have sold off their lactating stock, reserving heifers in order to give their families the break they needed to spend time together.

In any case, it's important to take into account family emergencies. Murphy's law applies here and part of setting realistic goals is recognizing that you need to include some breathing space in any plans you use.

By setting goals, the dairyman has a dream to
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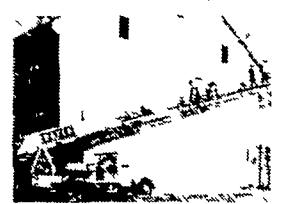
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