

*Last in our series of interviews on dairy management*

# You can't run a million dollar dairy with ten cent people

**BY PAT KAUFFMAN**  
LANCASTER — In this last segment of our series on dairy management, the interview at Glenn Shirk's suggestion was with a Chester County dairy farmer. Additionally, ideas on our topic, dairy employee relations, are offered by a Lancaster County farmer.

William Moore, Chatham, farms approximately 1150 acres and has 440 Holsteins, 85 percent of which are registered. His wife Sally, said the family has 2 girls in college and a 13 year old son. She said their operation depends on good help.

Sally said the employee program they have worked out is designed around people. In their business she said they think of the people first because the people are really the most important thing. She said they could not function without reliable dairy employees.

The Moores' operation consists of three double 4 herringbone parlors. They have eight milkers in each parlor. Each milking takes approximately 4 hours.

Presently they have 10 fulltime and 4 parttime employees, she said. They have 4 females employed in the positions of heifer manager, assistant heifer manager, assistant herd manager and office manager.

She said that turnovers seem to come in spells, but that some of their present employees have stayed 11 and 12 years. The system they use has evolved over the years according to Sally.

Early problems such as not having people they could count on, or who could understand the complex operation, and people who were only looking for a house or who destroyed houses

came to mind for Sally. She recounted tales of absent-minded employees during the early years and recalls during a period of fatigue accusing her husband of trying to run a million dollar operation with ten cent people.

The new system which Sally says has really paid off for the family is based upon recruiting their employees from local ag colleges. Almost all their employees have 2-4 year college degrees, she said.

Additionally, she said they require references, and future employees come to look the operation over, often staying the whole day to see if everyone feels they'd like to work together.

She said this eliminates the people who came to the door and were just looking for a house, some of whom she said were alcoholics.

Sally explained that the machinery and the cows are just too valuable and sophisticated for someone without more experience.

In their setup, there are 3 separate herds, each with a herd manager and assistant herd manager. The manager and the assistant each milk once a day. They are responsible for veterinary and breeding scheduling including choosing sires, and for scraping the lots.

The Moores use a freestall system of housing and feed on lots. With the 4 hours required for each milking and the duties involved in caring for the animals, 2 people really are required to milk each herd daily, she said.

In addition, they make all grass and corn silage, an operation which requires considerable help.

Sally said they give all their managers training.

Herdsmen are sent to the large herd conference held at Penn State. And once a year, the Moores send their employees to the top people at Atlantic Breeders and have them go over the breeding program and show the herd managers how to pick the right bulls.

Also the herdsmen are sent to the milking school at Penn State shortly after coming to the farm and sometimes again later for a refresher course.

One aspect she seemed proud to mention was the fact that they pay half of the tuition for their employees to the Dale Carnegie course. Those who work with people under them are almost required to attend the classes, and almost all have done so, she said.

She said they try to give a good base salary and add to the salary as much as possible with inflation. They are located between Wilmington and Philadelphia she noted and must provide adequate wages to meet the competition.

An important part of their employee program deals with incentives. She said their employees help to set the goals they try to reach. The incentives take the form of bonuses for reaching volume and production goals.

The Moores use percentages of the total pounds of milk per unit and on production per cow over a certain minimum. These bonuses are then paid in December for a big Christmas bonus.

Their heifer manager gets a bonus based on calf mortality under a certain percentage.

All employees receive a house, and Sally said they

built new ones or remodeled existing housing to provide what she termed "excellent housing" for their employees. In addition, a yearly allowance for sprucing up the house is budgeted.

A swimming pool is provided for use by the employees. Garden space and beef are also part of the fringe benefit package.

A comprehensive health plan, workmen's compensation and unemployment are all carried on the employees. And after the third year, an HR10 retirement program designed to retire them at present salary through life insurance, some investments and social security is started, she said.

Each employee receives 60 days off per year and after 10 years, that increases to 70 days off.

When an employee has been with the Moores for 10 years, Sally said they send the husband and wife on what they call their "ten year trip" for a week's vacation all expenses paid.

Sally said this program has given them excellent results and after 6 months with the Moores the help is expected to give 2 weeks notice before leaving. Most do, she said.

One example of a dairyman who runs a smaller operation was interviewed in Lancaster County. While the dairyman wished to remain

anonymous, some of the ideas he has used to form his dairy help program may be of interest to other dairymen.

In the case of this dairyman, he has no em-

ployees. The two men who work with his herd are what he termed "contract laborers."

These men work for an  
(Turn to Page B3)

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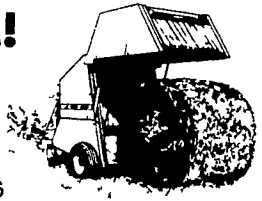
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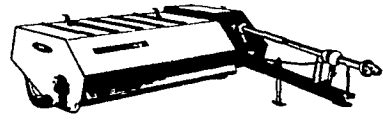


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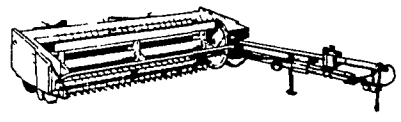
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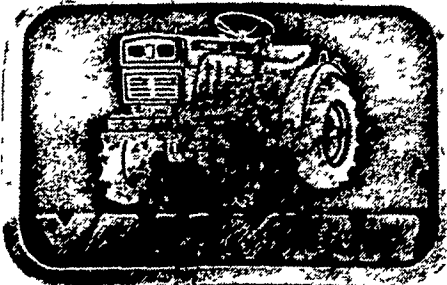
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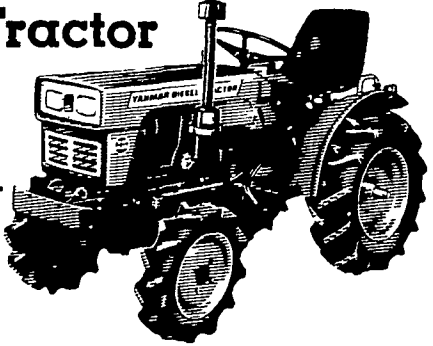
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