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## The Dairy Business

By  
Newton Bair

### How Much Change Can We Stand

What changes have you witnessed in the farm scene since you started farming? Depending on how long you've farmed, or how long you have lived, you can chalk up quite a list. And no matter how long the list, it would not contain every change that would be considered significant by someone.

And did you ever notice just how quickly farmers latch on to new ideas? As a breed of rugged individualists, we are never slow to try out a new gimmick, especially if it holds out a little hope of improving our lot. Of course, if it doesn't pay off, we soon drop it, but it's amazing how many crazy new ideas of the last fifty years have stayed around.

The mechanization of agriculture has been just one of the success stories of our age. Even cows have been mechanized beyond Grandpa's comprehension. But the greatest strides have been made in some of the more subtle areas such as genetics in both cattle and crops, pesticides, chemicals and electronics. Most purely mechanical devices are now only slight improvements over yesterday's gadgets, but we've only begun to use the really advanced technology of the Space age on the farm.

Will we be forced to keep up the pace?

There is a lot of evidence that our rapid adoption and use of the latest in technology has brought agriculture to the brink of disaster. We have succeeded in eliminating the need for millions of farm workers. Most food and fiber is now produced in such abundance that markets are flooded and prices on the knife edge of profit or loss. And the only way to salvations is to continue to produce more 'efficiently'. It almost seems as though our 'efficiency' has reached the limit of human endurance. I sincerely hope not.

Young men and women are still feeling the urgency of establishing their place in the Sorry Scheme of Things on the land. And they will, given an even chance, take over

from their tired elders and continue the race to out-produce their neighbors and the whole world. And they will make it pay, and we will continue to eat. Because, as Omar Khayyam in the Rubayyat predicted, they will "dash it all to pieces, then, Remould it nearer to the Heart's Desire."

So, if I may also make a prediction, we have only begun to scratch the surface of advanced agriculture. The most exciting times are just ahead, and I envy the youth that will have a hand in making it happen.

And the pace that will be required will not be too hard to endure, because there is still a tempering presence right here in our midst that still holds on to many of the time honored virtues of humility, honesty, and hard work. These team farmers know how to combine the Old with the New and make it work. That plowman behind the six-horse team probably has a computer in the house!

He certainly has one or more diesel engines that power a series of acceptable devices that can make life a little easier. Those hydraulic lines can go anywhere and run anything. So can the compressed air lines, which have the advantage of service from pressurized storage useable at any time without starting the diesel engine. Not as handy as electricity, but acceptable. And the horse is still fueled by hay, the best source of renewable energy on the farm! Besides which, it still remains a symbol of strength and stability on the farm scene.

Never have so few farm laborers produced so much food. The pressures will always remain on those few, but the rewards will also be there for those who can get it all together. Getting it together will mean using the latest in technology, and also keeping in touch with some traditional values. Farmers must retain the Spiritual values which make us human. Then the fast pace of progress can be kept up and endured.



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