

# The Dairy Business

## By Newton Bair



### Cut The Apron Strings

The Singer farm has been in the family for a long time. In four more years, it will qualify for recognition as a Century Farm, having been bought by Grandpa Singer back in 1890.

Jake and his wife, Martha, are the third generation to farm the land and keep a herd of dairy cows. In fact, dairying has become their way of life, and with the help of their son Josh, they have developed a good herd of registered Jerseys.

Josh has worked on the farm since he was old enough to feed the calves, and now owns several cows that grew out of his 4-H projects over the years. He has saved some of his wages, has a late model Chevy pickup, and intends to marry his steady girl, who is also a

farm girl who owns several 4-H cows. Time to get started farming on their own.

Whoa there! Let's look at the situation a little closer. Jake and Martha are not ready to turn the farm over to Josh, and there is no way to get enough money together for Josh and his bride to start out on their own. Besides, Dad and Mom Singer can't handle the 60 cows without help. Simple solution - take Josh in as a partner, and everybody's happy. We hope.

Father - Son partnerships are quite common, and seem on the surface to be a sensible solution to the problem of starting a new generation on the farm. Many of these arrangements work out just fine, but there are obstacles to be hurdled and pitfalls to be avoided.

They usually work quite well for a year or two, or until one or the other of the partners begins to feel that he is getting the shorter end of the stick.

I've seen it happen both ways. Dad has always been the "boss," and fails to let Junior make any decisions that affect the business. Junior feels like a hired hand instead of a partner, and wants to get out just when they have borrowed more money to expand. Dad is crushed by the thought of having to manage the farm and the extra debt load alone.

The problem can also develop when Junior has too many new and revolutionary ideas for Dad to understand. Middle-aged parents have worked hard, lived frugally, and lived without things that couldn't be bought for cash. A modern farm demands equipment and facilities that can be bought only with lots of cash, most of it borrowed. Only Dad has the equity and the assets to back up a loan, so the son is either hesitant to propose improvements to the business, or takes the family out on a shakey limb with his innovations. Either scene can lead to trouble and conflict.

Now, it must be admitted that there are many degrees of dissention that can develop between two-generation partnerships like this. It is only when the disagreement becomes intolerable that a break must occur. Many family spats can be healed by sitting down and communicating. Communicating does

not mean just talking things out. Real communication only happens when both sides are listening to what the other is really saying. Feelings often go deeper than the words can express. And words can often be misleading, like making statements that only portray small hurts instead of real diversity in ideas.

Let's assume the farm business is making progress in spite of differences of opinion. Chances are that things will go smoother if Dad begins to realize that Junior has really grown-up and is ready to take on more responsibility.

Maybe he hasn't got all the experience of added years, but he has been exposed to the advances of time and technology, and only needs the tempering that responsibility will provide.

This correcting move on the part of the Senior partner is called "Cutting the Apron Strings." The trick is to recognize when the time is ripe to let Junior take on more responsibility for making major decisions. Cutting the ties to the older generation may mean the difference between Junior being a true partner in the business, or just another hired hand.

### July Milk Priced At \$11.86

NEW YORK, N.Y. - Dairy farmers who supplied milk plants regulated under the New York-New Jersey marketing orders during July 1986 will be paid on the basis of a uniform price of \$11.86 per hundredweight or 25.5 cents per unit. Market Administrator Thomas A. Wilson also stated that the price was \$11.27 in June 1986 and \$11.93 in July 1985. The uniform price is a marketwide weighted average of the value of farm milk used for fluid and manufactured dairy products.

The seasonal incentive plan does not effect the uniform price for the month of July.

A total of 15,898 dairy farmers supplied the New York-New Jersey Milk Marketing Area with 993.2 million pounds of milk during July 1986. This was a decrease of 0.3 percent, about 3 million pounds from last year. The gross value to dairy farmers for milk deliveries was \$118.6 million. This included differentials required to be paid to dairy farmers but not voluntary

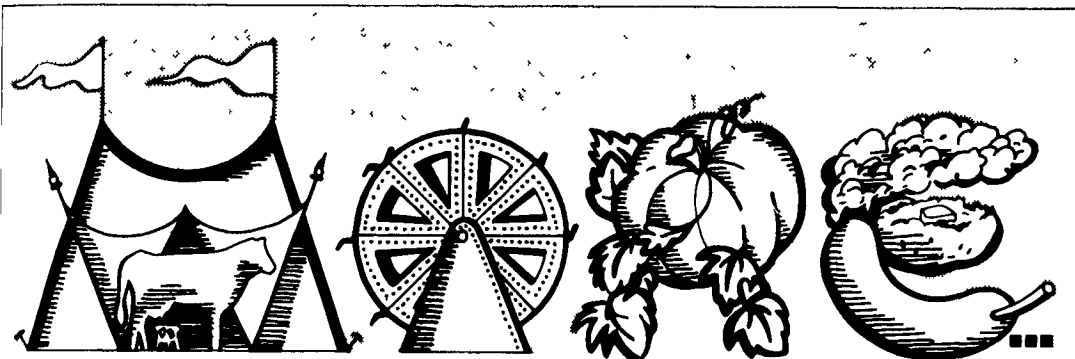
premiums or deductions authorized by the farmer.

Regulated milk dealers used 377.6 million pounds of milk for Class I, 38.0 percent of the total. This milk is used for fluid milk products such as homogenized, flavored, low test, and skim milks. For July 1986, handlers paid \$13.53 per hundredweight or 29.1 cents per quart for Class I milk compared with \$13.71 a year ago.

The balance, 615,599,027 pounds or 62.0 percent, was used to manufacture Class II products including butter, cheese, ice cream, and yogurt. Handlers paid \$11.09 per hundredweight for this milk.

The uniform price is based on milk containing 3.5 percent buterfat. For July 1986, there was a price differential of 16.5 cents for each one-tenth of one percent that the milk tested above or below the 3.5 percent standard.

All prices quoted are for bulk tank milk received from farms in the 201-210 mile zone from New York City.



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