

Tenpenny Farm: Building For The Future Of Dairying In New Jersey

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The planning started to pay off when the Blascos began shipping milk in the end of October to Dairylea. On 15 head they are averaging 38 pounds per day. "We are just engrossed in watching the amount of milk (shipped) grow," Kelley said. "That we are able to receive payment for the milk and get something out of it besides a 'good night Pearl' at the end of the day is just amazing," Vince added.

One of the drawing cards for the Blascos was the ability to work together. "It's your own business and it is a way of life. We saw what could be done and we were in the right place at the right time," Kelley said. "This is our dream, our children don't exactly embrace the idea," Vince added.

Their four children, John, 18, Scott, 16, Shannon, 15, and Melissa, 14, have always been there to help out, Vince notes. He credits Kelley and his two daughters with getting the farm off the ground. Kelley did the milking and herdsman duties with help from his daughters while he did other things to prepare for the eventual start up, Vince stated.

He objects to the term part-time farmer. He doesn't know how you can farm successfully part-time. "I now know why they put lights on tractors," he quipped. Kelley added, "My mind swims with how difficult it must be to do the field work and cow care."

Vince doesn't profess to knowing all the ins and outs of the business. "I've been on the business end of the cow and the fork. Not that this equates to 30 years in the business, but our specialty will be in herd management and processing." For this reason, they based their ration on hay, which they buy, and 60 acres of high intensity pasturing.

"The professors at Rutgers and Penn State told us — if you're going to raise feed, raise all of it and if you're going to buy your feed, buy all of it. I always thought that if the feed was cheap, I couldn't grow it cheaper. If it was expensive, everyone had a bad year and I would too. There is no cloud hanging over New Jersey that makes everything grow right," Vince explained.

Things have not always gone well for the Blascos. "We've been lucky. Things that could have set us back 10 years were resolved within a week. We had help from above," Vince said.

They reached their financial breaking point shortly before their loan came through. Without the loan to build the barns they would have had to sell the cows, Kelley explained. The feed was near the end, something had to give, Vince added. With the loan approval, plans proceeded as hoped for.

By September the construction was scheduled to be completed and the cows moved in. However, it wasn't until mid-October that the project was finished. Up until then, Kelley was milking 18 cows in a six stall barn held together by baling wire. "God bless baling wire. It reached the point where it was coming apart, but we weren't going to invest anymore in repairs," Vince remembered.

He marvels at what they have now, compared to when they started with a make-shift milking set-up and a one iron-lung vacuum pump.

With all new facilities, they don't anticipate problems with keeping the facility clean and the neighbors appeased. "If we allow people to watch what we are doing we'll have to keep it clean or we'll run

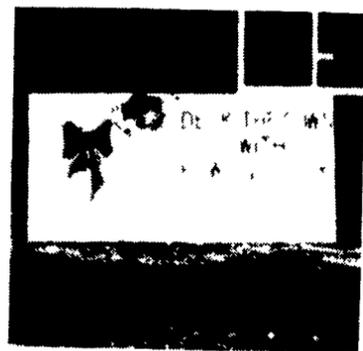
away business," Kelley said. "We will need to be a showplace."

They plan to start processing when they milk 40 cows and hope the demand is present for planned increase to 80 cows. "Three years ago we planned to sell to 3 percent of the population. With the ever increasing population, our outlook for success look better," Vince said.

Although they are optimistic about their plans, Vince admits he has an added security. "The price of ground has raised so much in New Jersey that if things don't work out we would have sufficient funds from the sale of the ground to haul the buildings away."

The skyrocketing price of land is a concern for Vince. Although he recently received an offer of \$2 million for his 80 acres, he explains that with this type of incentive farmers cannot afford to continue farming in New Jersey.

He urges Pennsylvanians to increase their land preservation efforts. "Once the land is gone, you have wall-to-wall people and you can't get the land back." In New Jersey the building boom happened quickly and the state's land preservation efforts were too little too late. Vince noted that the two most expensive places in the



"God bless baling wire," Vince Blasco stated when recalling the condition of their old milking barn. Boards were braced from the ceiling to support the stanchions.

country to build homes were located in New Jersey.

Vince notes, "We are probably getting in at one of the worst times, but we may be hitting it right."

The Blascos have their master plan drawn. With wise management and optimism their future and new year look bright.

USDA Buyout Report

WASHINGTON — An estimated 8,800 head of dairy cattle were slaughtered in federally inspected plants during the week ending Nov. 22, as a result of the Dairy Termination Program, the U.S. Department of Agriculture announced Wednesday.

This total includes all cows, heifers and calves identified as dairy animals designated for disposition in compliance with the program requirements.

The cumulative total of cattle slaughtered under the program from April 1 through Nov. 22 is an estimated 870,600 head.

The purchases of meat in addition to normal purchases are to help offset the effects of the DTP on the domestic meat market. The cumulative purchases, reported bi-weekly as of Dec. 5, total 333.3 million pounds.

Dairy cattle reported for export under the program for the period April 1 to Dec. 5 totaled an estimated 45,719 head. An estimated 1,205 were exported during the week ending Dec. 5.

Live cattle exported under the program are expected to increase as countries develop tenders to participate in the export enhancement program.

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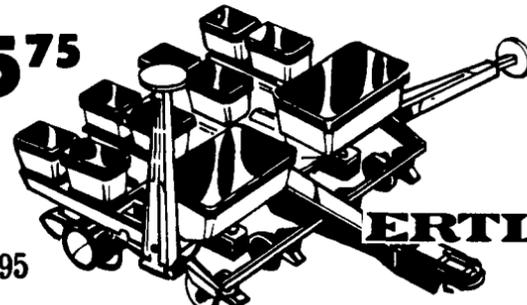


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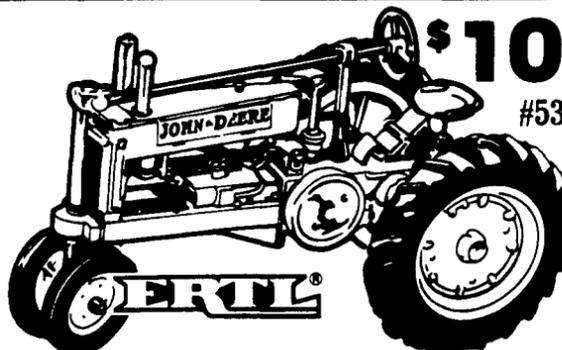
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