The San Diego Union May 31, 1959

Some of 500 head of Holsteins milked twice daily are shown in their stanchions at Ridgedale Farms operation near Pala. The 1,034-acre Pala Ranch on which the dairy herd is pastured is believed to be largest in county. Barn shown accommodates 160 cows, milked, fed and washed down automatically.

AGRICULTURE NEWS

New Dairy Built In Record Time

By LARRY FREEMAN

PALA — Subdividers building in river bottoms in the San Diego area have nothing on dairymen.

Out of the San Luis Rey River bottoms on state Highway 76, two miles east of U.S. Highway 395, has suddenly sprung a dairy operation complete with 600 cows.

Donald L. Brewer, manager of the 1,034-acre Pala Ranch on which the new dairy has been built, believes it's the county's largest single dairy operation.

The dairy went up as fast as subdivisions. First leveling was started last year in October. Joe Lucio of Escondido, who leases the new dairy, milked the first cow March 1.

The plant includes not only a completely automatic dairy barn for 160 cows, but has seven pastel-colored stucco homes of three and four bedrooms, six for milkers and one for Lucio, who formerly operated the Cloverdale Dairy on the San Pasqual Road.

There also are four hay sheds housing 300 tons each and numerous other utility structures.

PURCHASED IN 1958

The L-shaped ranch was purchased June 21, 1958 by the Ridgedale Corporation, of which A. M. Ghormley of Beverly Hills, president of the Carnation Milk Co., is head. Ghormley plans to live on the ranch part of the time.

The ranch was bought from Gordon and Roland Wight, who at one time had thriving peach and apricot orchards.

Brewer says Ghormley looked over many California ranches before selecting the Pala site and the basis for his decision, as might be expected, was water.

There are nine wells on the ranch, each producing 1,000 gallons a minute or more.

Brewer, who has his office at the "old home place" a mile east of the new dairy farm, said that "it might be a calculated risk" to build a dairy in a river bottom.

"But it's a good gamble," he said. "There's less rain, and more dams, and besides there's not much other level ground and the dairy is easily accessible to milk tank trucks."

3,000-GALLON TANK

So highly automatic is the dairy barn that the milkers (men) actually have a thing to do except attach the milking machine to the cow, and the machine to the pipe which shoots the milk into a 3,000-gallon stainless steel bulk tank.

Brewer concedes that the men must do a little manual washing of the cows, although automatic sprinklers, almost like those on lawns, shoot up out of the concrete floor to do most of the job.

There's no more pitchforking of hay to the cows during milking time either. Pipes, with augers inside, bring them mixed grain pellets which drop into feed boxes at each stall, and when the proper amount has dropped into the box, it automatically shuts off the supply.

PIE-SHAPED CORRAL

When the milk tankers come to haul the product to San Diego, the driver simply attaches a hose to the bulk tank and presses another button. No one touches the milk.

Outside, the cows work their way through a pie-shaped corral to the barn, and when milking time comes (at 1 a.m. and 1 p.m.) all the attendant has to do is open the door and let them in.

All but a few of the cows are Holstein, with a few Guernseys and Jerseys. All wear a yellow band around their necks for identification and production checking once a month.

Lucio, who came from a San Joaquin Valley ranch three years ago to Escondido, says everything mechanical is fine, but the cows themselves eat the pellets too fast, then cry piteously and the temptation is to press the button and give them more.

For the present herd about 4,000 tons of dry hay is required annually, all of it hauled in. The dairy has equipment to handle 1,500 cows, but additional corrals would be needed for more than the present 600, about 500 of which are being milked at all times.

Ghormley recently told Brewer that not a single gallon of milk is brought into Los Angeles in 10-gallon cans any more. It all comes by tanker.

WORLD'S LARGEST

In fact, he had to search a long time to find a few of the old 10-gallon cans.

"They'll soon be antiques," Brewer said.

Brewer is raising replacement heifers of all ages up to springers at the home ranch. There, the contractor says, the world's largest pole barn, supported on telephone poles, has a capacity for 500 heifers. Brewer plans to raise 170 acres of corn, has 250 to 300 acres of pasture, and 120 acres of alfalfa.

He keeps two bulls from the Carnation home farms near Seattle. All breeding is by artificial insemination.

Brewer is right at home on the ranch, where he lives with his wife and three children. He grew up on a dairy farm near Modesto, Calif., and was graduated in dairy husbandry at California State Polytechnic College at San Luis Obispo in 1956.

County Farmers Back Price Supports' End

[illegible] ... acreage allotments and acreage ... and ... backs ...

Following are the questions asked and the members' responses.

[illegible]

He said prices of cucumbers, green beans and tomatoes dropped sharply in mid-month, although there were good profits on earlier shipments. [illegible]

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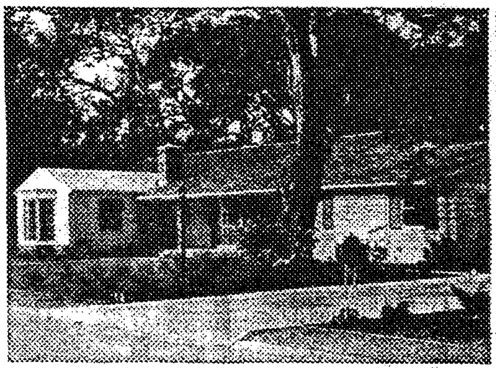

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