



The Neighborhood Dairy Co-op

How to create a successful, small scale dairy cooperative.

Organization

- **14 “Shares” milking twice daily.** Everyone owns a specific day and time!
- **Expenses are equally split** between all shares.
- **Have a schedule.** We found 7AM & 7PM to work best. Stick to it!
- **Lead person;** probably whomever initiates the co-op.
- Establish standards and procedures everyone agrees to.
- Annual or semi-annual meetings to go over procedures and to make decisions.



Establish Rules and Standards

K.I.S.S. (Keep It Simple Stupid)

Simplicity

Make it as simple and easy as possible. If it is complicated you will lose people.

Time Commitment

It takes us about 35-40 minutes to milk and do chores because it is easy and structured.



- **Contract ?** Consider putting everything into a contract members sign.
- **Buy-in** This cannot be circumvented. No “inheritance” or just passing share along to a friend if a member wants to get out.
- **No Sharing of Shares** Too much risk involved doing this and you don’t know who’s interacting with your cow and property.
- **Personal Referral** If you can this is your best insurance to keeping order and unity
- **Strict yet Flexible** I let everyone know there are expectations that cannot be taken lightly. Your actions affect ,and put at risk, everyone else’s health and investment.

What's Needed

- **Cow:** I recommend Brown Swiss
- **Location:** Place to pasture or corral your cow(s) and an **indoor “barn”** to milk and to clean and store equipment.
- **Hay:** we buy one year supply at a time. First cut hay is ideal.
- **Milking Equipment:** Auto milker is a must!
- **Corn:** silo or nearby source is helpful
- **Power:** no one likes milking in the dark or off a generator that won't start on cold mornings. Can be done, but not recommended.
- **Culinary Water:** for cleaning and water source for cows

Costs

- Our first year costs were about \$7,000 which included the purchase of the cow, a year supply of hay, milking equipment, and build out of the milking parlor.
- **Minimum Buy-in of \$500 Is Absolutely Required per Share!** Original start up costs may be more or less than \$7,000 (14 x \$500) depending on your location/situation, but the buy-in must not be less than \$500. Apply any remaining amounts to future years.
- We average \$300-350 a year per share. This buys a year supply of hay, covers utilities, purchase of some supplies, and vet bills. Some years cost more depending on our capital improvement projects (added power, built a hay barn, new equipment, etc.)

Equipment

- **Milking Equipment** Hamby Dairy Supply. This complete system is advertised for \$2100.
- **Strainer** \$150; don't forget the filters!
- **Transport Bucket** 7.9 gal; Make sure it has a locking, sealed lid. \$175
- **Rubber Boots** (rubber boots). \$15-20
- **Kitchen Sink** Not kidding! Need to wash the equipment.
- **Stanchion** Used to lock cow into place; Can be home built.



Getting Started

First Things First

1. **Find Like Minded Individuals**— as many as possible to spread responsibilities and costs. This is important to avoid drama and to reduce work load, burden, and burn out.
2. **Find Location:** space, shelter, water, and power
3. **Find a Dairy Cow.** Contact a dairy and see if you can buy a 3-4 year old cow. Some dairies turn their cows over pretty quickly. Highly recommend Brown Swiss.

Cleanliness

Procedures have to be written out and well explained.

THREE rinses or washes (about 2.5 gallons each) to clean the milk tubes and inflations (suction cups)

1. COLD water rinse
2. Hot water wash with soap and a capful of bleach
3. Hot water rinse

Hand wash all other parts, bucket, and strainer in hot, soapy, bleach water.

Hang equipment to air dry. Change out towels frequently.

By keeping good cleaning standards you should never have contaminated milk.





FEBRUARY 2021

| sunday | monday | tuesday | wednesday | thursday | friday | saturday |
|---|--|---|---|--------------------------|--|---|
| | 7:15 60 7:30 61 | 7:30 57 6:50 57 Groundhog Day | 7:30 65 7:15 60 | 7:00 60 7:30 61 | 6:45 59 7:15 50 | 7:45 56 7:05 55 Waitangi Day (New Zealand) |
| 7:10 60 7:10 57 | 7:15 60 8:00 65 | 7:45 62 58 | 7:30 72 6:45 60 | 7:00 67 7:30 63 | 7AM 60 cleaned out 6:45 51 Lunar New Year Lincoln's Birthday Chinese New Year | 7:10 77 7:20 61 |
| New Inflatons 7:30 60 7:00 60 | 7:15 62 7:10 63 Presidents' Day Family Day (Canada) | 7:15 63 57 6:50 | 7:20 71 7:00 54 Ash Wednesday | 7:00 65 7:15 65 | 7:00 66 6:50 52 | 7:10 65 6:40 52 |
| 7:25 66 7:30 62 | 7:20 61 Washington's Birthday | | | | | |
| 7:15 62 7:20 | | | | | | |

Notes:

JANUARY

S M T W T F S

1 2

MARCH

S M T W T F S

1 2 3 4 5 6





Questions? and Actions!

Here is my Tuesday application to Monday's class about soil salinity. I recently had a soil test performed with a resulting 4.4 salinity, so I took positive action and followed their recommendations the very next day.

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