

cows are being milked. The fussy cow, the bossy cow; the hand-reared heifer who has never known hardships or ill treatment, whose back the smallest child can bestride in safety. For the man concerned with production rather than the selling of pedigree stock, looks don't matter much. A deep frame, a kind eye, and a well-shaped udder are more to be desired than most show-ring points.

In this article I speak particularly of city-milk production, a branch of dairying that yields high returns but calls for 365 days of unremitting labour. Its high returns are partly offset by the high cost of land and of winter feeding. To give you an idea of those costs and returns I will set out roughly the figures for my own dairy-farm. In normal times it would employ the labour of myself and another man. Owing to my absence in my old Service during the last three

years the farm has been short-handed—using occasional outside labour in my place. Now, the really important thing about any piece of land is the number of people—not of cows or pigs or sheep—that it will support. The net



“The retailer appears on the scene . . .”

cash income has to be divided amongst owner, employee, retailer, mortgagee. What comes in cash is not the whole story, however. The value of cheap fuel and farm products and often material and spiritual health which comes with good country life must be taken into account. In round figures the position under the new guaranteed price for milk is as follows:—

Area—65 acres, of which 50 are heavy alluvial soil.

Stock—30 cows, with 6 heifers, 6 calves, bull, &c.

Estimated output for 1944–45 season—60 gallons a day.

Total retail value of milk—£2,160.

That sum of money represents the direct or indirect support of a large number of people. To get rid of the indirect beneficiaries first. Rates, taxes, insurance, seeds, manure, repairs, and

other maintenance charges amount to around £400. Next comes the dairyman with his wife and six small children, who draw roughly £250. In addition they get house, vegetables, milk, and firewood free, and meat at an average of 3d. a pound. With family allowance they are reasonably secure.

Now we come to a very sad and strange state of affairs. The retailer appears on the scene.

Out of the 2s. a gallon paid by the consumer, the retailer gets 11½d., or £1,050, on an average round of 60 gallons a day. For that he has to erect a small dairy building to house his milk and wash his cans. He owns an 8 h.p. car with an open back from which he delivers the milk, and he works at most six hours a day, including his book-keeping. Thanks to the war and zoning, his delivery cost is down by about 3d. a gallon, so that,

at a moderate estimate, £600 of his £1,050 is clear profit. I like my “milkie.”

He has a good sense of humour and we often have a good laugh over what a mug I am to have all the capital cost of the farm—all the

worry, work, and expense—and then the dairyman and myself combined draw considerably less than he pockets. This anomaly must be cleared up before long, but I would advise every prospective dairyman who is near a city to aim at having his own retail round.

Here is the present distribution of the produce of Snowdrop and her mates tabulated and drawn by our artist.

Except for the anomaly of the retail profit, this is a fairly satisfactory state of affairs. Of course, should the farm be mortgaged to its full value it would have to support a mortgage and I, as nominal owner, would be unable to make a living. The obvious remedy, which will allow a man with small capital to enter dairying, is to balance up producing and retailing profits so that the retailer makes, say, £300—a very good return for his short hours and small responsibilities.