

Exploring Vermont Dairy



Technology on Vermont Dairy Farms

Lesson 1 Pre-Assignment

Instructions:

For this assignment you will be conducting a phone interview with an active or retired Vermont dairy farmer over the age of 65. Select the person you will interview.

1. Review the questions below and practice before you make the actual call.
2. Phone your farmer – do not call after 8:30 pm
 - a. **Introduce yourself and tell the farmer that you would like to** interview them over the phone as part of the “Discovering Vermont Dairy” program.
 - b. Tell them that the “Discovering Vermont Dairy” is a cooperative effort between the University of Vermont Extension 4-H program and the Vermont Department of Agriculture, Foods and Markets and that the purpose of the program is to give youth a in depth understanding of Vermont dairy farming.
 - c. Explain that the interview will take about 10 minutes and ask if now is a good time or if you should call back at another more convenient time.
3. Answer the following questions – add additional sheets as needed.

Name of person being interviewed:

Name of person conducting the interview:

Q1. Are you an active or retired dairy farmer?

Q2. What year did you start farming?

Q3. How long have you or did you operate a dairy farm?

Q4. In what town did you farm?

Q5. When you started dairy farming about how many farms were in your town?

Q6. How many people worked on your farm?

Q7. Of the people that worked on your farm how many were relatives or family members?

Non –family members?

Q8. How many cows did you milk on your farm when you started farming?

What breed of cows were they?

Q9. What type of milking system did you have when you started farming?

Q10. How many cows do you milk on your farm now or when you retired?

What breed of cows were they?

Q11. What type of milking system is currently on the farm?

Q12. How was manure handled (usage or storage methods) in the winter when you started farming and how is winter manure handled now?

Q13. What method is used on your farm to incorporate manure onto cropland?

Q14. What crops were fed to the cows on your farm when you started farming in the winter?

Q15. When you started farming were cows grazed in the summer months?

Does your farm currently graze cows in the summer?

Q16. When you first started farming was milk the only source of farm income? If no, what types of diversified income was there? (Example: breeding stock, butter, cheese, maple sugaring, fruit and vegetable sales, eggs, etc.)

Q18. Is the farm diversified today or is milk the only source of income?

Q19. When you started farming can you please explain how herd health was monitored and if it is done the same or differently today?

Q20. When you started farming what types of business records did you maintain? Did you keep records by hand or did you use a computer?

Q21. Are the business records that are kept on your farm today kept on a computer, notebook, or in a shoebox? Are the current records more or less detailed?

Q22. How are the records you keep used to make decisions regarding the expansion of the farm, improvements to the farm or when considering machinery purchases?

Thank the farmer for their time and ask if you can contact them again if you have further questions.