



Figure 8.

Most dairy farmers are owner-operators (fig. 8). A dairy farmer with 20 to 30 cows usually finds his net income rather small to divide between two families. Then too, it is difficult to obtain renters with the necessary experience to feed and care properly for a dairy herd that has higher than average production. A third reason mentioned by some operators is the lack of money or credit necessary to carry a renter's share of the dairy herd and feed supply in addition to the machinery needed now for expeditious and effective farm operation. Whatever the reasons, the fact remains that opportunities for young men to begin farming as renters in the dairy areas are more limited than in such areas as the Corn Belt.

Developing a dairy herd through a breeding program may be a lifetime business for any dairyman. This is especially true if he expects to produce his own replacements. Dairy farming is not a flexible business. The main enterprise—milk production—cannot easily or quickly be changed.

Dairying requires a higher quality of labor than does the production of many farm products. Rough treatment or irregular feeding will reduce production. In some situations even the presence of strangers in the barn will temporarily reduce the milk flow.

LOCATION OF DAIRY AREAS

The large numbers of milk cows in the northeastern part of the country and west of Lake Michigan are first of all the results of physical features of climate, topography, and soil which make for a large percentage of the cropland in legumes and grasses. Milk cows can utilize these feeds more effectively than can most other classes of livestock. A second factor leading to this concentration is the competitive situation which reflects many factors, including the heavy consuming population in, or close to, these areas.

In the Great Plains areas and the South there are fewer milk cows than in many other regions. Pasture conditions, markets, and production alternatives have not especially favored milk production in many part of these regions.

The milk equivalent of all dairy-product sales has increased 2½ times since 1909, meanwhile milk sold as whole milk has increased fivefold, but sales of cream and butter have decreased to about one-half the quantity sold in 1909. The center of the whole-milk sales has moved westward from the northeastern to the north-central parts of the country (Table 8). Sales of whole milk from the Middle Atlantic geographic division accounted for nearly 40 percent of all whole-milk sales in 1909; by 1954, this percentage had dropped to 18. The slack was taken up by the geographic divisions to the West and South. The West North Central Division increased its proportion from 7½ percent of whole-milk sales to 13 percent, while the rest of the West and South increased its sales from 10.3 percent to 29.2 percent.

Table 8.—DISTRIBUTION OF WHOLE MILK SOLD, BY GEOGRAPHIC DIVISIONS: 1909 TO 1954

Item	1909	1919	1929	1939	1949	1954
Whole milk sold...million pounds.	16,600	21,752	38,318	46,220	68,529	81,310
Percent sold, by geographic divisions:						
Total.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
New England.....	9.4	8.2	6.7	6.5	5.0	4.8
Middle Atlantic.....	38.7	34.7	25.2	22.8	18.6	18.0
East North Central.....	34.1	37.5	37.6	38.6	37.3	35.0
West North Central.....	7.5	5.2	7.4	7.4	11.8	13.0
South Atlantic.....	2.2	3.2	4.3	4.5	5.5	6.2
East South Central.....	1.2	1.3	2.9	3.2	4.1	4.5
West South Central.....	1.1	1.5	3.0	3.8	4.0	4.3
Mountain.....	1.6	1.9	3.0	3.1	3.2	3.7
Pacific.....	4.2	6.5	9.9	10.1	10.5	10.5