

Farmer Question Compilation

- I. Cows—all farms
 - A. Breeds—advantages and disadvantages
 - B. Herd size
 - 1. Advantages of more vs. less
 - 2. Composition—age of cows and young stock
 - 3. Proportions of home grown or purchased?
 - 4. Do you sell heifers?
 - C. Feed
 - 1. Pasture or not?
 - a. How much per cow?
 - b. How much of the year
 - c. Seeds?
 - d. Mowing?
 - e. Rotational grazing?
 - f. If not, why not?
 - 2. Non-pasture feed
 - a. Composition
 - b. Source
 - c. Costs
 - D. Milking cycle
 - E. Milking process
 - F. Herd health?
 - 1. What are common health problems
 - 2. How do you prevent?
 - 3. How do you treat?
 - G. Milk production
 - 1. How does it vary over the cycle?
 - 2. How does it vary by cow
 - H. Lactation Cycle
 - 1. How old at first cycle?
 - 2. How long each cycle?
 - 3. How many cycles on average?
 - 4. Where do old cows go?
 - I. Reproduction
 - 1. Frequency
 - 2. Artificial vs. bull
 - 3. Semen selection for what characteristics
 - 4. Miscarriage and abortion rates
 - J. Calves
 - 1. What are they fed?
 - 2. What happens to bull calves?
- II. Milk handling and marketing—all farms
 - A. What happens to milk from the time it leaves the cow?
 - B. What is milk tested for and how? What happens when pathogens or prohibited substances are found?

- C. What prices do you get? How have they varied in the last few years?
- D. How to buffer against fluctuations in prices?
- III. Ecological effects—All farms
 - A. Nutrient management
 - 1. What happens to manure after it leaves the cow?
 - 2. Relationship to herd size?
 - 3. Lagoon regulations
 - B. Stream runoff
 - 1. Buffers?
 - C. Other possible negative effects?
 - D. Carbon imprint
 - 1. Fossil fuels
 - 2. Cows
- IV. Organic—Edelweiss
 - A. Why do it?
 - 1. Health benefits?
 - 2. Ecological benefits?
 - 3. Economic benefits?
 - B. Transition costs
 - C. Price premium: where does it come from?
 - D. The role of Organic Valley as an organization
 - 1. Price supports
 - 2. Vet support
 - 3. Loans
 - E. What accounts for the consumer desire
 - F. Any criticism from other farmers?
 - G. Experience in other parts of the world?
- V. Raw milk—Jackie's
 - A. Why not organic?
 - B. Pathogens testing
 - C. Criticisms of health dangers, etc?
 - D. Price premium?
 - E. Any price fluctuations?
- VI. Manure digester
 - A. What goes in?
 - B. What comes out and where does it go?
 - C. What do you get paid for what?
 - D. Financing
- VII. Producing-handling—Twin Brook and Jackie's
 - A. Transition costs
 - B. Bottling and production costs
 - C. How do you market, and where? What works?
 - D. Containers, recycling, etc?
- VIII. Canada?
- IX. More general questions—all farms
 - A. What is most satisfying about your life?

- B. What is the biggest challenge?
- C. What does sustainability mean to you, and how do you promote it?