

## Cream Separators and Cows in General

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### From Heather E. Chapman

The subject of cream separators and milk cows in general brings back a lot of memories. I hated milking cows and would do anything possible to get out of doing it. Everyone knew it and even in my high school yearbook, a poke was taken at me when they wrote that one of Heather's favorite pasttimes was "milking cows". After I left the farm, wouldn't you know it? My parents purchased a milking machine!

I remember an incident which happened when I was about 4 or 5 years old as I was in the barn watching my mother milk. Thinking I was sitting down on an upturned milk pail, I accidentally sat in a full pail of milk instead. My feelings were terribly hurt when my mother only laughed at me and said I would have to wear the wet, soggy clothes I already had on because there were no clean ones available.

Another incident which sticks in my mind happened when I was about 14 years old. My parents were away somewhere for a few days and I (being the eldest) was minding the farm. I noticed a cow behaving very strangely and had the feeling that there was something terribly wrong. Kept checking up on her every so often and after a number of hours, found the poor thing was trying to give birth to a calf which was "stuck". Although my parents had always sheltered me from knowing how babies (including farm babies) arrived in this world, I must have instinctively picked up some knowledge from things I had overheard. Anyhow, I knew that the calf would have to be physically "pulled" into this world with a rope but didn't know how to go about it. So I phoned an uncle and told him what I thought needed to be done. He very kindly came over and the calf was duly delivered - just in the nick of time. The poor thing (a very huge calf) required a bit of hand nursing for a while but developed very well.

Another bovine story occurred when a calf was born which just couldn't stand up no matter how hard it tried. My father was going to shoot it but Mum asked him if she could have the calf if she saved its life and got it on its feet. Dad said "Sure, go ahead." Mum nursed and bottle-fed the calf until she had a healthy looking beef calf almost ready to go to market. She was really looking forward to the money she would receive from its sale when she noticed it hadn't returned from the pasture with the rest of the herd. Upon searching the pasture, she found it lying there dead. She was so mad at the calf for dying, she said she just couldn't help herself. She actually kicked the calf for dying!

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### From Gary Less

I have written my family history and growing up experiences for my grandchildren to enjoy in years to come. I have found it enjoyable for myself to re-read many of these experiences. I can truly agree with other's experiences with cream separators and cows in general as milking cows and turning a cream separator were probably one of the main reasons I left the farm. However, I have many pleasant memories growing up on a farm in northeast Nebraska.

One of these was about my best friend which happened to be a dog called "Pet" who was of the Heinz 57 variety breed. He was short haired, a golden yellow color and about 18 inches tall. Pet was an extremely intelligent dog. Everything he did was self taught, he apparently just observed what was needed of him and reacted accordingly.

One of my daily chores was to find and bring the milk cows home for milking from a 160 acre wooded pasture. The pasture was hilly, with several deep creeks, a lot of tall hemp growing in ravines, goose berry bushes, poison ivy, sumac and many oak, walnut, elm and iron wood trees which made it difficult to find the cows. Two of the cows had a bell hung around their neck so that when they ate grass the bell would ring revealing their location. If the cows happened to be lying down at the time you were looking for them, the bells naturally would not ring. When Pet and I would finally find the milk cows, we had to get them moving on the path to home. This is when Pet moved into action. I would say "siccum Pet" and he would start to bark and nip at the heels of the cows to get them moving. He was a natural heel nipper. He would come in low, nip the cow's heel, stay low to the ground and when the cow kicked back at him she would always miss him. The cow path home had a fork at the top of one hill. One fork led to the creek bed which had a running stream for the cattle to drink, this fork also meant a much longer tedious route home. The other fork was a short cut home. On days when Pet was with me, he always made the cows take the short cut home. There were days when Pet didn't feel well and I was by myself, on those days the darn cows would always head for the creek and I would have a heck of a time getting them home.