

Kansas Agricultural Experiment Station Research Reports

Volume 0
Issue 2 *Dairy Research (1984-2014)*

Article 338

1994

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John E. Shirley

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Recommended Citation

Shirley, John E. (1994) "Managing high milk-producing herds IX. Raising dairy heifers and steers: a business. Surviving GATT, NAFTA, and the 1995 farm bill," *Kansas Agricultural Experiment Station Research Reports*: Vol. 0: Iss. 2. <https://doi.org/10.4148/2378-5977.3263>

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MANAGING HIGH MILK-PRODUCING HERDS
IX. RAISING DAIRY HEIFERS AND STEERS: A BUSINESS.
SURVIVING GATT, NAFTA, AND THE 1995 FARM BILL

J. E. Shirley

The primary focus of the dairy industry in Kansas has been the milking herd. However, dairy heifer replacements and dairy steers offer income opportunities that have been largely ignored by some Kansas dairy producers. The 1994 Dairy Day program highlights these programs as potential profit centers. An "opportunity cost" analysis comparing the economic returns from your present enterprises with the potential returns from a dairy heifer or steer enterprise might propel you into a new career or enhance the profitability of your total operation.

The dairy commodity group at Kansas State University strongly believes that there is a

future in the dairy industry for the family farm - small and large. We also are convinced that production per cow, judicious allocation of resources, knowledge of the U.S. and world economic climates, effective marketing, and a willingness to adopt new technologies are keys to success in the dairy industry. The economic climate of the future will be affected significantly by GATT, NAFTA, and the 1995 Farm Bill. The challenge is to be aware of the positive and negative aspects and adjust business management decisions accordingly. Remember, in most cases, it is not the number of cows nor the government that determines success or failure but the ability of the manager to adapt to change.