

Like Father And Grandfather Before Him

By ELIZABETH STEWART
Womans Editor

When Melvin L. Kiser, Jr. graduated from college with B. S. in industrial education, he didn't dream he'd return to the farm and operate Kiser Dairy like his father and grandfather before him.

The Bessemer City native, born and reared on a farm, has operated Kiser Dairy for 11 years and has revolutionized his 500-acre dairy operation into big business, developing several innovations in conservation which earned for him the honor of being tapped Gaston County's Conservation Farmer of the Year.

Kiser, 35, son of Mr. and Mrs. Melvin L. Kiser, Sr., is using strip cropping, sediment ponds, drain tile in his bottom lands, and other soil and water conservation measures which have earned for him a wide reputation as a successful dairyman utilizing good conservation practices. As the regional winner in the N. C. Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Kiser won an all-expense paid trip to Litchfield Park, Arizona which was presented by Goodyear Rubber Company.

Getting up early and milking 140 milk cows and caring for 160 heifers and calves is just part of the work of a dairy farmer and the young Bessemer City farmer declares that "farming is something you have to like to do."

Because pastures are drying up in the excessive heat, the animals are fed from corn silage and both corn and wheat crops are harvested for silage on the Kiser farm.

Melvin is quite proud of the production average of his herd, 17,000 pounds of milk per cow or eight and one half tons of milk per cow per year, an astronomical figure and "quite a feat for my herd," he says.

Another innovation of Kiser's is the record keeping where each cow's record is kept by computer at N. C. State University with a milk tester visiting the farm each month to weigh milk, Kiser's expert bookkeeping system even recording pregnancy checks of the cows on

a monthly basis. One can look quickly at his records and see which cows are "ready to calve," the age, and other statistics, a "big help in managing a large herd," he says.

Calves are kept in individual pens for two months and then moved to other barns, grouped according to their ages.

Another innovation in farming today is using trench (underground) silos instead of upright silos because the trench silo is much easier and less costly to operate and will store much more.

The Kiser herd consumes, for instance, 50 pounds of corn silage per day and two pounds of commercial dairy food per day.

Melvin Kiser has improved erosion problems by strip farming and a sediment pond retains the run off from streams.

His cows are milked twice, in the early hours from 5 until 8 a. m. and in mid-afternoon from 3 until 6 p. m. with automatic milking machines where eight cows are milked at a time. The milk is never touched by hand, with automatic take-offs from the cow's udder and into a large tank cooled to 36 degrees. After each milking, the cows are dipped in iodine solution to keep away bacteria, an extra precaution which pays off.

Being a dairyman also requires the farmer be a veterinarian, a nutritionist, a good bookkeeper and manager, being able to make decisions on purchases, give medicine to his herd and deliver his animals to market.

Irma Kiser recalled such an experience on the farm. Their young daughter, Hilda, age five, watched her father perform "surgery" on one of the cows, restitching the cows' stomach, remarked that she had changed her mind about becoming a doctor after she witnessed her father closing the incision.

Dairy farming is a seven day a week, full-time job, according to Mrs. Kiser, who was reared on a farm in Burnsville, but had never seen a dairy operation until she met and married her husband. The Kisers met while both were students at East Tennessee State University and

Mrs. Kiser, the former Irma Radford, taught third grade in Bessemer City schools.

Being a farmer's wife and mother of a pre-schooler is a full-time job, says Irma.

The Kisers are active in First Methodist Church of Bessemer City and Mr. Kiser is vice president of Gaston County Farm Bureau and active in a number of farm-related groups.

R. Wilson Barnette, chairman of the ASCS of Gaston County, presented certificate to Kiser for the Gaston County Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

Mr. Kiser sees the future of the dairy business as "bright," with no shortage of milk. Because of dry weather, he will harvest less than one half of his corn crop but he's thankful he has prepared for such emergencies with silage.

The Kisers live in a brick colonial spacious home on 12th Street Extension near Bessemer City and their next-door neighbors are Mr. Kiser's parents.

Mrs. Kiser likes to sew and has used some of her own needlepoint and paintings to decorate their home. She also likes to cook and prepares three meals a day for her busy husband.

Irma Kiser shares some of her recipes with readers:

POUND CAKE

2 sticks butter, 1/4 lb. (no margarine)
1/2 cup Wesson oil
Blend together
3 cups sugar
5 large eggs
1 tsp. salt
4 cups plain flour
1 cup milk
2 tsp. vanilla

Add milk and flour alternately
Bake at 350 degrees for one and one-half hours in tube pan. Cool 10 minutes before turning out of pan. Brush with butter and cover with tin foil to make good moist cake. This cake keeps well and has been shipped to several parts of the country, including to friends in Okinawa and Vietnam.

BLUE CHEESE DRESSING

2 cups mayonnaise
1 1/2 cups creamed butter milk
1/2 lb. Roquefort or Blue Cheese (she mixes these)
2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce

1 teaspoon garlic salt
Blend
Refrigerate. Makes one quart. Select butter milk well. Be sure it will keep for couple weeks.

FUDGE CAKE

Sift together:
2 cups plain flour
2 cups sugar
1/2 tsp. salt
Bring to boil:
1 stick margarine
1/2 cup shortening
3 tablespoon cocoa
1 cup water
Bring to boil. Pour over flour. Beat until well blended. Beat together.
2 eggs
Add teaspoon vanilla, 1/2 cup

buttermilk and teaspoon soda, add to other and mix thoroughly. Bake in a 11x14 covered pan. If pan has no cover, use tin foil to cover. Bake for 35 minutes at 350 D.

ICING

Melt stick margarine, three tablespoons cocoa, six tablespoons plain milk, add one box confectioners sugar, 1/4 teaspoon salt, one teaspoon vanilla one cup pecans or walnuts and pour over cake.

GRECOL

(This casserole is delicious when made ahead and refrigerated a day before serving)

Photos By Lib Stewart

One onion chopped
One green pepper chopped
Cooking oil to fry pound of ground round

One or two small cans of mushrooms, drained
Two cups shelled macaroni, boiled and drained

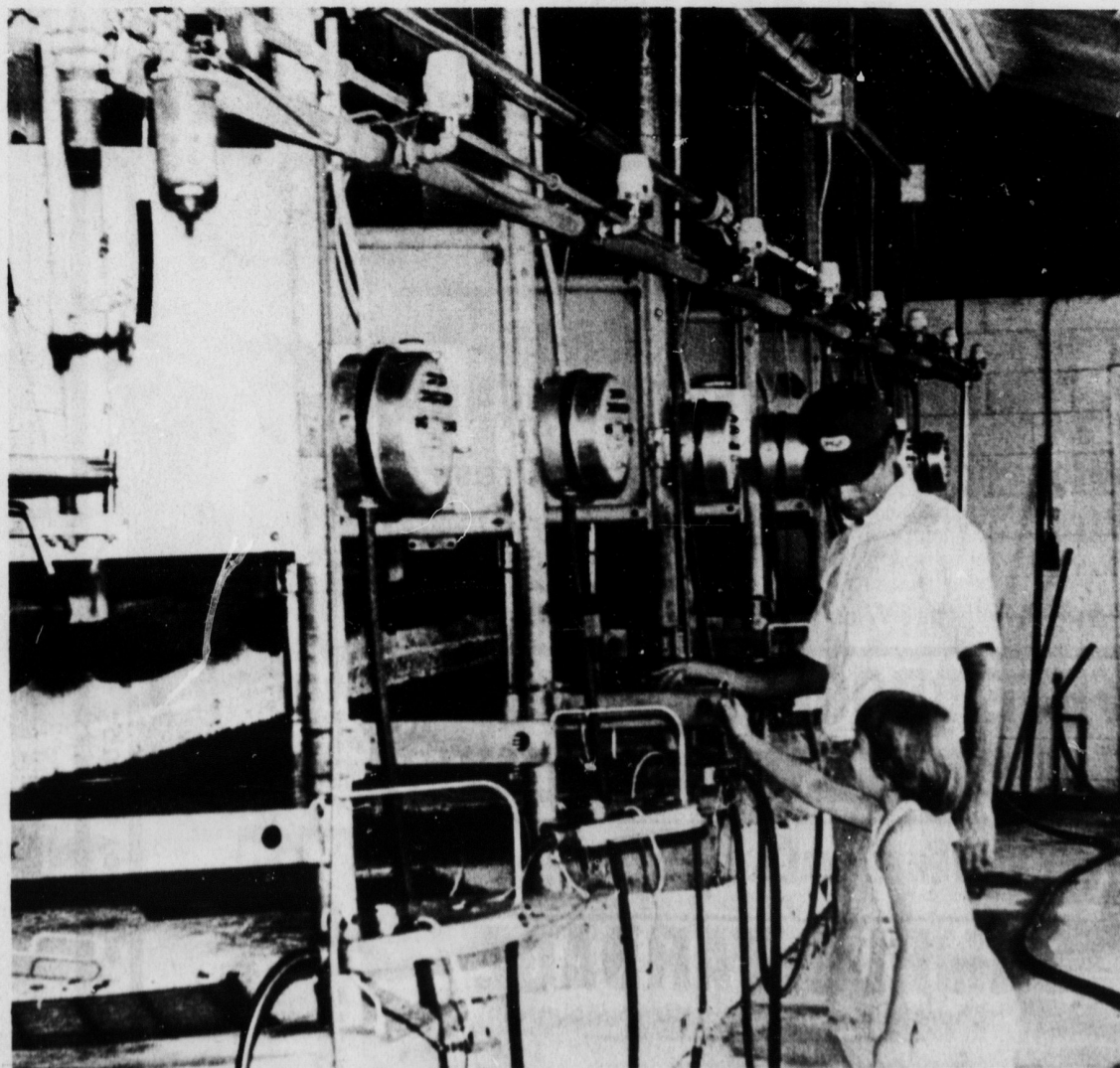
Three cans tomato sauce
One cup cream style corn
Sharp cheese

Fry onion and pepper, add meat. Mix in other ingredients. Place in greased casserole dish and refrigerate. Next day, grate cheese for top of casserole and bake in 300 degree oven for one hour.



KISER FAMILY OF BESSEMER CITY. — Mr. and Mrs. Melvin L. Kiser, Jr. and their five-year-old daughter, Hilda, are pictured in the living room of their Bessemer City home. Mr. Kiser was

recently honored as Gaston County's Conservation Farmer of the Year. Hilda holds a stuffed frog.



MILKING MACHINES — Hilda Kiser and her father, Melvin Kiser, Jr., are pictured in the milking barn on their dairy farm in Bessemer

City. The automatic milkers enable eight cows to be milked at a time with the milk automatically fed into a large cooled tank.



FEEDING TIME — It's feeding time at the dairy farm of the Melvin Kisers, Mrs. Kiser and

his daughter, Hilda, feed one of the calves in the large herd.