

A Trip to California

One of the things that makes my hobby dairy farm work is the fact that I purchase all my feed from my brother just up the road. It's great feed with all the right ingredients mixed in to make it very tasty and the cows love it. The feed tastes great to them and they eat a lot of it helping them to produce milk like it's going out of style. In the summer I pick up the feed I need each day, but when the weather cools off, I can pick up two- or three-days' worth with no problems occurring. In the summer, if I have too much feed in front of them, then the feed gets hot and spoils. It takes careful management each day to get just the right amount for them to clean up. In the old days we would push the feed cart and wheelbarrows through the barn feeding a little ground corn and a protein supplement before each milking. After milking the cows were let outside to eat their corn and hay silage at the bunk. If it were winter, we would let them back in the barn in a couple hours and feed them dry hay to chew on all day while they laid in their stanchions. In the summer, the cows would be let out to the pasture after morning milking to sit or stand under the shade trees and swat the flies away using their long tails. Most of the time when the flies are bad the cows stand in a big group under a tree and work together to keep the flies away. Today, my cows get to stand in a cool free stall barn with fans and sprinklers helping them to stay cool during the heat of the day. I must say that they have it pretty nice compared to the old days.

My wife and I took a trip to California earlier this summer and we drove through some of the San Joaquin Valley. We had never been to that part of the country before, so we decided to just go before it was too late. We had an amazing trip as we were able to hike a little in Yosemite and see some of the beautiful giant trees in the Great Sequoia National Park. An unexpected treat was the drive in the San Joaquin Valley on our way back to the airport in San Francisco. It was quite a sight to see all the wonderful groves of almond and olive trees, the many vineyards, as well as fields and fields of other vegetables that they grow there. We also saw some of the large dairy farms in the valley. According to what I saw, they did not need a lot of facility to milk a few thousand cows. Since the climate is so ideal, the cows stay outside on dirt lots all day. They did have some shade over parts of the cow lot and over the areas where they ate their feed, but for the most part they were standing outside in the open air when they weren't in the milking parlor.

My wife and I have been so blessed to see so many parts of this great country over the years. From Maine to California and from Florida to Texas to Montana and more, the beauty of this blessed land is overwhelming. It makes me think of the song, I'm Proud to be an American by Lee Greenwood. If you haven't heard the remake of that song this summer, you better google it and listen. It brings tears to my eyes especially since we are seeing so many people in our world that hate this country so and want to destroy our proud history as a God-fearing country.

I love the verse found in Psalm 33:12, *Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord*. I pray that we proud Americans will return to our strong faith in God and the Lord Jesus before it is too late and we lose His blessing. Until next week, God bless.

