FINNISH FOLKLORE AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE GREAT LAKES MINING REGION ORAL HISTORY PROJECT 1972-1978
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SUBJECT: Farming and related subjects.

SOURCE: Ron Mantila

COMMENTS: Ron is working the farm his grandfather homesteaded. Ronald's father is retired, lives next to him, and helps out with the work. Farming is in their blood after three generations of it. In this tape Ron expresses the in's and outs, the shortcuts, and the "craft" knowledge involved in farming in the Copper Country.

R: The third week in June or there abouts.

I: How tall is the hay?

R: Oh, it varies from a foot up to three feet maybe depending on the type.

I: A foot to three feet.

R: Clover is shorter and Timothy is taller grass.

I: You wait until the Timothy's about...

R: Just until the Timothy is beginning to head that's when we start cutting when it gets a head on it...just before...just when it starts coming out.

I: Okay, when you start cutting then...you usually do the cutting you and your dad?

R: Both of us...I think I do most of it, but he does it once in awhile too.

How much do you usually cut at one time? How do you decide?

R: Well, it depends on the thickness of the hay...that usually it runs maybe five acres, maybe a little more.

I: So, you don't cut it all at once.

R: No

I: Because it'll get left on you.

R: Yeah, oh when it's young it takes about two or three days to dry real good.

I: Two or three days then...are you cutting more while that hay is drying...?

R: Yeah, every day, usually depending upon the weather. If it's nice weather you usually cut every day...some every day so you always have some for the following day...preceding it.
I: Do you often do cutting and baling then in the same day?

R: Un huh, yup...we usually cut in the morning...we usually cut until noon, then by that time if the...

I: How come you cut in the morning?

R: Usually the other hay has got dew on it and you can't rake it or bale it in the morning, so we'll do the cutting in the morning and then in the afternoon when the sun is out warm and it dries, well the hay that we cut a couple days before well we rake it then and then later afternoon start baling it.

I: Un huh...it has to be dry when it's baling?

R: Yeah...sometimes bale it in the evening if you've got nice weather.

I: And in good weather it takes two or three days for it to dry?

R: Yeah, when it's real young.

I: What's the best kind of weather?

R: Oh, hot, sunny but not humid...

I: Not humid...

R: Yeah...but hot days when you happen to get into the eighties or there abouts...eighties or nineties...

I: A little wind is good too on the ground.

R: Yeah, a little breeze but not a real lot.

I: Because that'll blow it up.

R: Yeah

I: Alright then, when you cut you usually use two tractors...you and your dad or for the most part you.

R: Yeah I usually do the cutting and then if either he does the raking or else one of the boys, maybe Dennis or Randy...

I: Does the raking?

R: Yeah, sometimes.

I: With the other tractor.

R: Yeah, with the John Deere.
I: Alright, what does a modern mower run about like the kind that you have? The list price on one.

R: Well, that isn't the most modern...the better ones run I think oh anywhere from twenty-five hundred dollars to three thousand.

I: And a tractor is approximately how much?

R: Oh, around...oh I don't know, I haven't priced them recently but I'd say around four thousand...three thousand to four thousand and up to as high as eleven-twelve thousand for the big ones.

I: Do you usually have one of the boys, Dennis or Randy helping rake it or does your dad usually do that too?

R: Well, it depends...it depends...it kind of switches off, if they're around, if the boys are around and they're not busy well they do the raking.

I: Now, on this baling and picking up, what has to be done and who does what?

R: Well, after it dries it has to be raked and depending upon if it's a little green after you turn it over, it has to dry from the underside.

I: Oh, so often you have to rake it and turn it over again

R: Not usually...not usually if you leave it dry enough, but depending upon the weather especially if we get a little rain on it you usually got to go over it again and you flip it over another time...just turn it once over.

I: Un huh...back to the cutting. How long does it usually take to cut an acre...approximately? Given normal conditions.

R: Un...I'd say a half hour.

I: Half hour to cut an acre?

R: Yeah

I: What about the time to rake that about?

R: I think it's a little faster raking...you could probably rake an acre in fifteen-twenty minutes.

I: Okay, what about baling or this whole operation here?

R: Well, that depends upon the thickness of the hay because the thicker the hay you got the slower you got to go...the thinner
faster you go.

I: Right

R: So, gee I wouldn't know...you could bale an acre in forty-five minutes to an hour I'd say, depending upon the thickness.

I: Okay then, you usually run the tractor and do the...

R: No, not as far as baleing...last year my dad run it quite a bit and I did a lot of the unloading here this day I was baleing, but lot of the times well he's been running it.

I: Okay, when one guy's running the tractor...he runs it of course along the row so that it's baled in. What does he have to watch for? What are some of the problems that you have to watch for?

R: Well, one thing you gotta watch that you don't get too much hay in at one time...you gotta slow down if you're...you know if it's real thick so it doesn't break a shear pin in the baler and oh once in awhile you get a loose bale coming out and I don't know what the reason is for it, but usually you feed that back into themachine if we can.

I: You mean it isn't tied, huh?

R: Yeah...or the knot breaks when it's going. And let's see, don't think there's much other problems.

I: So the trick on that is just driving it at the right speed and watching the thickness of the hay and what do you call them rows?

R: Wind rows.

I: Wind rows?

R: Yeah

I: Windrows...watching the thickness of that so too much of that doesn't...too much doesn't get in there at once. Have you broken any shear pins?

R: No, not recently

I: But that'll happen, hey?

R: That'll happen yeah.

I: How does it break the shear pin?

R: Well, there's a pin mounted right on the fly wheel and when it's turning it gets a big chunk in there and it slaps against
the hay and it can't push it back fast enough...it just bunches up in there and stops it dead so it shears the pin on it...safety feature.

I: Okay, now when a loose bale comes out, do you usually watch it...does the driver usually watch it and then stop and...

R: Yeah

I: What do you do then?

R: Well, you usually shut the machine down and throw it out if it hasn't thrown it into the wagon already...pull it out the back and throw it into the next windrow and bale it the next round. But sometimes it'll throw it in the wagon and it'll break in the wagon, well we just leave it there and after we empty the load with the good bales on it, then it gets left in the bottom then fork it out...and bring the wagon back.

I: About how many bales are tossed in your wagons here like that? On a load.

R: On a load?

I: Yeah

R: Oh, it usually runs around a hundred...up as high as a hundred and twenty. That's without going into the wagon or anything, you know. Depends how they land in there. If you get 'em started good and it works out right that they land the right way, you can go up to a hundred and twenty or so. Usually not much over that...usually it runs around a hundred and it depends too on going around the field...say you make a round and you've got...only got three-quarters of a load, but you can't make another round on there...well then we'll usually empty it and put an old empty wagon on it rather than to go half-way around and have to get the wagon from the other end of the field back.

I: Now, how many hay bales did you make, total number?

R: It was around eight thousand.

I: Around eight thousand?

R: Yeah

I: Okay, and straw bales?

R: It was around a thousand.

I: And how many cows will that take care of? How many do you plan from that acreage?
R: Well, there's around fifty head that it'll take care of.

I: Generally for a full-grown cow, how many bales for the winter here?

R: Well, divide fifty into eight thousand, what do you get? Four hundred? ... no...

I: Yeah

R: Yeah, four hundred.

I: Four hundred for the winter roughly... is that usually what it is about?

R: Yeah, that'd be about right. Of course it varies because some calves don't eat that much see.

I: Calves eat about half as much.

R: Well, not even half... depending on the size of the calves.

I: Generally is it a bale a day for a cow?

R: Oh, let's see well, pretty close... pretty close as far as a cow goes. Little bit under a bale a day.

I: Little bit under a bale a day for a full grown milking cow.

R: Yeah, right.

I: Alright, how long does it take to bale a load? One hundred bales or roughly under normal conditions?

R: Oh, fifteen - twenty minutes.

I: What would it take... that's with a modern baler... what does that baler run about... list?

R: Right now around three thousand.

I: Around three thousand.

R: Yeah

I: How long would you think it would take to haul a load in without the throwing technic... I mean, to bale it and pile it on the wagon?

R: Well, let's see. You could probably figure... well depending upon how much help you had too you could figure forty-five minutes at least... you figure just baleing it and going out there with the wagon and picking it up... that depends on how
many you got throwing the bales on too.

I: That's forty-five minutes for about how many guys doing it?
R: Well, with three guys you could do it in that.
I: Three guys stacking and tossing them, hey?
R: Yeah

And with two guys it would probably be like more than an hour hey?

R: Yeah
I: And with one guy it'd be a hell of a thing.
R: Yeah
I: Pretty close to impossible, eh?
R: Yeah
I: Is that ever done? Does one guy ever do that?
R: Well, like straw bales...I've picked up by myself, you just alone.
I: That's rough though, hey?
R: Yeah
I: Like with one guy doing it himself, it would take to get a hundred bales on...no, to bale it himself and to...and then to stack it and toss them on the wagon...to do a hundred bales...
R: You could figure way over an hour...probably a hour fifteen minutes, something like that...depending on how fast you move.
I: Oh, I bet it'd be close to two hours.
R: No, I don't think so...I don't think so
I: Because you'd have to drive the tractor, get off the tractor...don't forget this wouldn't be following behind...
R: No...no...I know.
I: You'd have to drive the tractor, get off the tractor...
R: Just depends on how fast you move.
I: I mean normal human function...I betcha it'd be two hours at least.

R: Yeah, it probably would...close to that.

I: Yeah, because you think of all the driving time you save too with having that behind. Eliminates an operation completely. Okay, let's say you just tossed on a hundred bales. How long does it take to unload?

R: Oh with two men...with two men unloading...usually have to have one in the barn...

I: And one on top...

R: Yeah...you can unload in ten minutes.

I: Hundred bales.

R: Yeah

I: Okay...with that elevator...yeah. Alright, now you've just probably completed a load, eh? What's happening in that picture?

R: Well, they're unhooking the wagon that's got hay on it...well the jeep isn't in there, but they got another empty wagon to hook on as soon as you unhook it and you pull ahead enough so you can get the empty wagon behind it.

I: Oh, you pull ahead with the...

R: Yeah, with the baler

I: And they pull that wagon away?

R: Yeah...well they pull the empty one in first, see. Pull the tractor ahead far enough to get enough room to get the empty wagon behind it; then pull...you know, start baleing and then back the jeep under the full one.

I: So, that's what these guys are doing.

R: Yeah

I: Well, how come they're running over to there?

R: I don't know...they like to run. Well, they're probably...maybe they're going to help him unhook it...I don't know.

I: Who usually decides when it's a full wagon load...your dad?

R: No...whoever's driving the tractor.
I: Un huh...you fill it to the point where if it were anymore it'd fall out or something?

R: Yeah...once in awhile you do...if you get it too full, you know you get toward the end, well you might have one or two fall out that you...

I: Out the front?

R: ...that you have to throw back in if you get too big of a load on it.

I: Alright, in this one right here they're pulling the empty wagon up.

R: Yeah

I: How many men are required to pull that wagon really?

R: Well, it depends on if it's sitting on level or uphill or downhill. If it's on level, one man can pull it.

I: One man can pull it?

R: Yeah

I: If it's uphill?

R: If it's uphill, it'd take a couple. Usually if it's on an uphill grade though, we back the tractor up to it rather than pull it ahead...especially if you're out there alone with a empty wagon sitting there, you know, you gotta hook up to it well, it's faster to back the tractor...baler right up to the wagon.

I: And it doesn't take them long to hook it up like that,

R: No

I: About how many minutes does it take to change it...to unhook the one and pull the other one up and...

R: I wouldn't say much more than two or three minutes. All you gotta do is put the pin in...there's a deal that hooks onto the wagon hitch on the thrower that keeps the thrower pointing towards the wagon on corners. Just drop that in place and hook up the wagon.

I: Is that a broken bale down there?

R: That's probably one that the tractor...or the baler threw out when you moved ahead, see. You have to move it ahead from that full wagon so you got space to get the empty one in there
and in the meantime it might throw one out, you know, as you run along that little distance.

I: How many wagons do you usually use? Looks like there's three of them.

R: There's three, yeah

I: You generally use all three too,

R: Yeah...well depends on if we got good unloading and they get back...whoever's unloading gets back with the empty wagon before or by the time you got the other one filled...well all you need is two then; but lot of times they don't make it back in time and you need that third one.

I: On this...you make the wagon yourself, don't you?

R: The rack of it, yeah. What they call the wagon gear with the wheels on it is bought.

I: What does that usually run about?

R: Well, that varies too depending on...the one I got this summer was a hundred and fifty dollars without the tires.

I: With the tires it runs?

R: Well, I put used tires on it...then that depends...it runs a hundred sixty - seventy dollars and up...I mean that was a cheap...well a good buy on that one. Usually they run around...lot of them run around two - three hundred dollars.

I: What would it run with the rack sides on it? If you bought it like that?

R: I don't know that you could even buy 'em like that.

I: Most farmers make that?

R: Yeah

I: You and your dad do that, eh?

R: Yeah

I: Is that very hard to do?

R: Oh, it's a little bit of work.

I: Can you do that in a day?

R: No, it took us...I don't know...I'd say a couple days at least on each one and they do break once in awhile and you have to
fix them. You break a board on it. Sometimes you throw a bale right through one of the backboards or where it'll break one of these long beams on the top.

I: That's all rough lumber there,

R: Yeah

I: Where do you get that lumber?

R: Well, that's some stuff we just had laying around...I don't know where it came from really.

I: Oh, you don't saw your own lumber...you don't have your own saw, do you?

R: No, we don't have our own saw now, but we do have lumber sawed up, so...

I: Okay...that's Stanley driving,

R: Yeah

I: About how old is he?

R: Oh, let's see...what is he now...he's thirteen or fourteen, something like that.

I: Does he usually drive the load back?

R: Oh, it depends...he likes to drive so he usually does if he's around.

I: They kind of get a kick out of that, don't they?

R: Yeah

I: You know, because they're not old enough to drive yet. Which one's the best worker here? Judging by the pictures, it looks like he's pulling the hardest, but they're all running.

R: Well, I don't know, they're all good workers.

I: Pretty hard workers, hey?

R: Yeah, Dennis is a real good worker too.

I: I see, is that Dennis there?

R: No, I don't think Dennis is in these pictures...no.

I: Is that Randy?

R: Yeah, that's Randy...Randy's a real good worker too.
I: Christ...that's something, because I really can't tell them apart, you know, with the long hair.

R: Keith is a little bit young yet...he doesn't do too much, but he does help out.

I: Yeah, the two twins are pretty strong...good workers. And they're going back here to unload it, hey?

R: Yeah

I: How long does it usually take to drive it back there?

R: Oh, not much more than two - three minutes depending on how far...well from that field it's just down the road a couple of minutes or so.

I: About twice as much from your other field?

R:

I: When do you usually finish haymaking?

R: That depends on the weather.

I: In a normal summer?

R: Oh, about three weeks it takes; sometimes we used to be done by the Fourth of July...it'd only take us two weeks. But normally around three weeks...last summer it was over four weeks...about five weeks.

I: Because of the rain.

R: Yeah

I: What...how long does it usually take most farmers? I know you've got a better setup...more efficiently organized on that.

R: Well, it all depends on the size of the farm and how many guys they got working; but...and when they start, but it usually takes most of them about a month...but...well I don't know, depends on how efficient they are.

I: Roughly a month.

R: Yeah...but with this setup, you can do it in three weeks...with good weather even two weeks if you've got ideal conditions.

I: Do you think there would be a market for someone to make hay for other...for farmers...let's say a guy that had all that equipment and would say, "I'll make your hay for such and such amount"?
R: No, I don't think so. There isn't enough farms around here and the ones that are do...

I: Have their own equipment

R: And lot of them are going to silages which eliminates a lot of the hay making.

I: That's sort of a new trend now?

R: Yeah

I: What kind of silage?

R: Grass...grass silage. Some of them use corn silage because they're developing, you know, faster maturing corn nowadays, so...

I: Have some people experimented with faster maturing corn here?

R: Well, yeah. Now that...Dick Brier said that some of the ones they've developed now they really cut the time...maturing time down from what they used to be.

I: But generally, how long does it take corn to mature?

R: Oh...well I don't know...I haven't raised any corn except sweet corn in the garden. What's that take...about two and a half months?

I: Un huh

R: And that's for early variety.

I: How long does it take hay to mature?

R: Well, what do you mean by mature? When it gets old enough to...

I: Ready to cut.

R: Oh well,

I: Ready to bale

R: Well, from the time...

I: Spring starts and until...

R: Well, what time does spring usually start? About May...middle of May, about a month...a little over.

I: And they've got some corns now that will work about the same.
R: And, of course, the corn they let go until late fall anyway before they harvest it...frost hits it...as far as for silage...they let the frost hit it a little bit before they put it in.

I: You've gotta have a big silo then, eh?

R: Yeah

I: What's the advantage of that?

R: Well, there's less handling. There's hardly no manual labor for one thing, and it's a better quality feed over hay...

I: More protein value?

R: Yeah, because it isn't dried out. It's almost like natural grass.

I: Corn?

R: Hay and corn both; because putting them in the silo is like putting them in a big can...vacuum packing them or something.

I: Oh, you mean a lot of these farmers will put hay in there too.

R: Yeah...put hay in there and top it off with corn...you know that the corn ripens.

I: So, when you're doing that, all you do it that you have your chopper, hey, like you got.

R: Usually what they do with that, they mow it first...that's the mower that puts it in the wind row and they let it wilt for a day and if it gets a little older...or grass, well it doesn't even have to wilt that long, just a few hours. Then they pick it up with the chopper pickup attachment just like the baler has on it and that chops that into a real fine...maybe a half inch long...

I: A little different variety of chopper than you've got?

R: Yeah, right. It's a four-inch chopper

I: What does that run about?

R: Oh, brand new it runs about two to three thousand dollars.

I: And your chopper, what's that called again?

R: It's a flail chopper...what they call a green chopper. And...
I: And that runs about?
R: Fifteen hundred is what I paid...that was new...fifteen hundred.
I: Okay, you think this is going to be a coming thing here?
R: Silage?
I: Yeah, because of the labor advantages?
R: Well, I think so, yeah. Of course
I: Have any farmers in the area started doing this?
R: Oh yeah. Rudy Karanen does it up there in Elo and another farmer in Tapiola...(???)
I: Have you talked to them about it?
R: Well, Rudy I have a little.
I: Is he generally pleased?
R: Yeah

How many head does he have milking?
R: Gee I don't know just what he's got...around fifty I'd say.
I: You've got around twenty-seven milking...did you say?
R: Twenty-eight maximum...it varies though between twenty and twenty-eight and sometimes a little less than that even... depending on when they're drying somewhat.
I: Well, with that many...as many as he has...that takes one hell of a lot of hay and a lot of labor, right?
R: Well, yeah see when you're feeding hay, but when you're feed-
ing silage and he fills that silo then he's all set...he makes a little bit of hay, you know, gotta have some ruffage...he makes a couple thousand bales of hay.
I: What size are the silos? General volume?
R: Oh, geees, I don't know.
I: What size is his about?
R: I think his is about twenty by sixty or twenty by seventy.
I: What does that mean? Inner diamater is twenty feet?
R: I don't know if that's in or out...I'm not sure. I think it's
sixty or seventy.

I: What are they usually constructed out of?
R: Lot of them are concrete or sort of a concrete.
I: They have to have any insulation or anything?
R: No
I: Just regular concrete, eh?
R: Yeah, as far as I know. I haven't checked into one that close.
I: Approximately what's the cost of the silo? Do you have any idea?
R: Oh well, let's see. That fellow was here selling them that one time. I guess it was twenty foot...now I'm not sure on the height if it was seventy feet or what it was, but it was around seven thousand dollars.
I: And if.
R: And you gotta figure a blower onto that for blowing your silage up into it...it's blown up.
I: To get it into it?
R: Yeah and you also not only have to figure that forage chopper but new chopper wagons and which you'd have to have, I'd say, at least two of them.
I: Which runs?
R: Self-unloading wagons run around a thousand dollars each.
I: And the blower runs about how much?
R: Probably between five hundred and a thousand.
I: About seven-fifty we'll say.
R: Right...maybe...well depends too on the height of you silo because you gotta have that pipe that goes with it. I'd probably run about a thousand bucks...the blower, maybe a little more.
I: How does the self-unloading wagon and the blower system work?
R: Well, the wagon has a premier chain all across the bottom and then it's got a small premier chain on the front of it that it empties from the side...empties into a hopper on the blower, then the blower sometimes has a re-cutter in there and
it chops that grass real fine...even finer yet

I: So when that stuff's in the silo, it's just like Post Toasties or something.

R: Yeah, it kind of a...almost a mash; but that way it packs in there and you can get more in the silo.

I: Yeah, the smaller the pieces the more efficient the fill. So these self-unloading wagons have a conveyor belt that just pushes it right out?

R: Right on the front...I think it's usually on the front. It's driven by the tractor power take off and then there's another small conveyor that goes out the side and dumps it into the hopper, see?

Yeah, into the hopper with the blower.

R: Yeah, right. And they usually got beaters up on top of these wagons or on the opening, you know, to kind of chop or keep that grass swirling down into the...you know, so it empties out clean.

I: So, that's pretty efficient though...unloading quick.

R: Right. That's what I said, it eliminates manual labor.

How long does it take to unload then?

R: I have no idea.

T: Not long though, hey?

R: I don't think so.

T: Not more than a couple minutes, hey?

R: Oh, I think it's a little more than that because you can only feed it so fast into your blower, you know. Just guessing I'd say probably about fifteen minutes. But they hold an awful lot those wagons too.

I: One of the problems on farming, it seems to me, is as people expand they run into labor problems like Hugo and Karenen. When you get to a certain point, you need more labor and if you want to get around labor you gotta make greater capital investment. Right? And that's the dilemma.

R: Right, and you're still not taking in anymore money really.

I: Because of the interest on the loans to get...

R: Yeah, well not only that, you're getting the same thing
accomplished but with less labor. So, I suppose you're saving on labor expense there, but I don't know if it's enough to offset the cost of...what you pay for labor...

I: What you pay for the equipment investment. That's kind of the dilemma. Now do the young boys in the community...I know these boys work for Keranen too, didn't they?

R: Yeah, Dennis did

I: Do they work for all the farmers around here...for most of them? Do they keep them busy? There's kind of a problem because hay making season doesn't last for the whole summer.

R: Yeah...well most of the younger fellows around here do work for different farmers, you know, if you ask them well they're willing to work.

I: What's generally the pay rate for labor for young boys?

R: Oh, I don't know...I don't think it's very much. Probably...maybe a dollar...dollar and a half an hour at the most.

I: And these are mostly kids that are still in high school or under.

R: Yes

I: Now, what are your near future plans as far as farming and the labor and capital investment?

R: As far as anything for farming?

I: Yeah...what are your plans.

R: Well, I'm thinking of going into that pipeline milker. In fact I'm kind of thinking in the near future...and I was telling you about it the other week. Possibly even this summer, I don't know.

I: Because of the fact that you dad is not going to always be helping you milking...he's getting older, right. His health is still good though, isn't it?

R: Oh yeah

I: He has no physical...

R: Well, his back has been bothering him a little. His knees and legs aren't too good, see.

I: There's a lot of kneeling and.

R: Un huh
I: Describe that system a little now, how that works.

R: Well, it's just a setup of stainless steel pipes where the milk is pumped directly into the tank without being carried or anything.

I: So the milk doesn't touch...there's no surface barn atmosphere contact.

R: No...it goes into the milk house and naturally the tank is open when it's pumped out, but...

I: It's got all the filters and it runs through filters.

R: It's filtered through the pipeline system. It's all stainless steel...oh then you can get as many units as you want to milk with, but I think one person can handle three units plenty easy.

I: That's about it though, eh? One person...

R: Yeah...you could probably do four, I don't know, depends on how...I haven't really asked anybody how many they run, you know, in a setup like that, but generally I guess around three, like if there's two people milking on a bigger farm, then five units which would amount to two and a half each. So, I think one person can handle three pretty easy.

I: Okay, right now you and your father takes about how long in the summer to get the cows in, milk them and get 'em out?

R: Oh, in the summer about...let's see...about a hour and a half to two hours.

I: To do the milking.

R: That's...yeah...getting them in, milking them, washing the milkers and getting them out.

I: And washing the cows.

R: Yeah, right...yeah that's included in milking.

I: Ahhh...how do you do it? When you get the cows in there and then the first thing you do is you lock 'em up and then wash 'em.

R: Yeah, we wash each one as we go along...put the straps on them and wash them.

I: Oh, just before...you don't wash them all at once.

R: No...no
I: Because they'll get dirty again by the...

R: Not only that, but a cow when you wash 'em, that stimulates them to let their milk down see.

I: Oh

R: Yeah, and they...and that usually lasts about...there's certain hormones that disagree when you wash them. It help them to let their milk down. And that don't usually last but only...

I: It sort of primes them up.

R: Yeah, it only lasts about five minutes altogether, that hormone action, I guess they say, so a cow from the time it's washed 'til the time it's milked should be about five minutes.

I: So you don't want to wash them much earlier than that

R: No, you just wash them just before...each one...when the one is done, you know, you wash the next one.

I: What kind of solution do you wash them with? How do you wash them?

R: By hand...use a...well you're using a clorine solution...you add an ounce of clorine to two and a half gallons of water.

I: And it's warm water.

R: Yeah...it's a sanitizer...it sanitizes and disinfects at same time.

I: And you use some kind of rag, eh?

R: Yeah, or sponges, either one.

I: Okay, does one guy usually go ahead...how do you and your dad work it? What kind of system do you have?

R: Well, there's no real system as to who does what. Whoever is handy and, you know, does whatever is to be done. Like if one person takes the milk off, the other guy will change the strap and wash the next one.

I: Right now you have three milkers?

R: Yeah, three.

I: And three straps.

R: Six

I: Six straps? Oh, you usually keep another strap...
R: So there's always one in advance, see, so you don't have to take it off the same cow that you just milked. You got that next one ready and then you take it off the one that's been milked and move it ahead.

I: So then when you have the cows in you wash about six right ahead.

R: No three.

I: You wash three, you put the straps on them and put the milker...

R: Put the milkers on three and put the straps on three ahead and then...you can tell when each one starts to get milked out you get to know the cows, which one milks out faster or slower, and you just wash always one ahead for whichever milker you're gonna change or if there's two that get done around the same time, you might wash two cows and, you know, change them both around at the same time.

I: About how long does it take the average cow?

R: To milk?

I: 

R: Oh, I'd say around three to four minutes as far as the actual milking.

I: And the milker you have now, that's a Serge one, right?

R: Yeah

I: What do they run? The whole milking unit

R: Boy, I don't know what they are now. Used...I can't tell you the new price, but used they run about thirty-five dollars.

I: Could you estimate it on the new list price?

R: Gee, I don't know if you can even buy a new one anymore. I imagine you could.

I: You mean this new pipeline has taken over the market.

R: Yeah...I suppose you can buy them...(???) is over a hundred dollars a piece for that type new.

I: Okay. And then you just keep doing it like that...wash...then you wash the three that have the straps on them, put the milker on them, put the other three straps on the next three and you go through like that.

R: Yeah
I: And you use one of those tall buckets?
R: Yeah
I: About how many gallons?
R: Five gallon.
I: How many gallons is in the milker?
R: Same thing just about if it's full, but usually it isn't...it isn't full, you know, depending on how much each cow milks and you dump it in.
I: And then you fill it up and one guy keeps dumping that bucket into the tank.
R: Yeah, whoever has time, you know, the time between switching milkers.
I: Alright. And then you've got the automatic manure cleaner.
R: Barn cleaner, yeah.
I: Does that dump put it in the wagon for you too?
R: Well, it goes up and around and we usually put the dump truck underneath there see, in the winter. In the summer, well...in the summer it doesn't have to get cleaned as often because the cows aren't in the barn that long. But in the winter, we put it straight in the dump truck and in the summer we put it in the manure spreader usually...leave that parked underneath there...when we do run it out, run it to the spreader.
I: And then do you spread it right away in the summer?
R: Well, when it gets full sometimes, you know, it isn't always full from one unloading or one cleaning.
I: What does a manure spreader run new let's say?
R: Oh, around a thousand dollars or more, depending on the size remover
I: What about the...you know, the conveyor...manure/system, about?
R: I can't remember what that was...I'd say a couple thousand.
I: Couple thousand for that. So, all that's required really is to scrape out the stalls into the gutter.
R: Yeah, right...to the edges of the walk
I: You do that every night or so in the winter?
R: Every morning in the winter. Some people do it twice a day, but lot of them just drop it behind the barn, you know, in a pile. But see, when we haul it out with the dump truck, we only clean it once a day because otherwise it'd be dark at night you'd have to be running that out with the dump truck in the field, it's just too much of a hassle so we only clean it once a day. A lot of them do...that drop it behind the barn...they clean it twice a day. It's better really to clean it twice a day...the cows stay cleaner because they're not laying in it all the time; but we usually in the evenings, we move it like...two cows standing, we move it a half a cow length so that there's always a little bit of a clean spot there, see, inbetween cows...move it a couple of feet in the evening so then it's not all in bunches...one bunch, it's kind of evened out a little bit.

Stop in tape.

I: What does a bulk tank run about? What capacity is yours?
R: It's two hundred and fifty gallon.
I: Are most of them around that?
R: Well, depends on the size of the farm. Hugo's is about the same, but he...they pick up from him every day. He actually should have a bigger one for that size herd. Rudy Keranen's got a big...a real big one...must be around, close to five hundred, maybe bigger.

I: The two-hundred and fifty, about what does that run new?
R: I'd say, a couple thousand.
I: A couple thousand bucks
R: That's just a guess again. I haven't really priced them.
I: And that feed holder that you have now...that feed bin...is that what you call it?
R: Feed pen.
I: Feed pen. Now, how do you get your feed? You grow your oats and how many acres do you harvest in oats?
R: Oh, it varies, but usually around thirty acres...sometimes forty, sometimes twenty, it depends.
I: And you take that stuff over to the Coop...
R: They pick it up from here.
I: They pick it up from here and grind it for you and then they
some stuff, right?

R:

I: What do they add?

R: Oh, usually like 36 percent soybean or...soybeans so high priced you can't afford it now...36 percent which is 36 percent protein concentrate...it just boosts the protein up in your feed.

I: What does soybean run about?

R: Soybean, well...is about ten dollars a hundred pounds

I: Un huh...has that gone up a lot recently?

R:

I: What was it before?

R: Around five...five something.

I: When did it go up?

R: Oh, just this fall now...this winter, early winter

I: That's your Soviet deal too.

R: Yeah and also because of the poor harvest year in the southern states...poor crops.

I: Okay, what does the Coop charge roughly for doing it?

R: Well, it all depends what you have added into it. Now as far as just pickup and grinding it and mixing it, you know they charge to pick it up from here, bring it there, grind it and mix it, and bring it back, that's nine dollars and then you add your...

I: They charge nine dollars for that?

R: Yeah

I: Boy, that's really reasonable.

R: But then you add your...like 36 percent of something like five dollars a hundred and I think we put...oh what do we put in there? About five - six hundred pounds or so. There's about...close to two tons of oats and about seven hundred pounds of corn, that runs around...over three dollars a hundred

I: How much feed per cow do you usually use? That's only in the winter that you use that, right?
R: Well, we give them some feed in the summer, but lot of them won't even eat it in the summer because if they're on good grass well, they just don't...they get enough out of it they don't even care for feed. Like, I don't know...my dad puts most of the feed for the cows as far as that goes and it depends on how well they're milking. Well, we usually use one of these one pound coffee cans and a cow that's milking real good usually gets around seven of those twice a day...that's be about fourteen pounds a day.

I: A good milking cow.

R: Yeah, around twelve to fourteen pounds a day...maybe a little bit more.

I: In the winter...and in the summer you give them just a little to keep them busy.

R: Yeah, just a couple pounds and what they eat...you know.

I: Couple of those coffee cans a day?

R: Yeah...sometimes, like when they first get out and on real good grass, we usually put one and some of the won't even eat that much. And some of them will eat more, it just depends.

Do most of the farmers around here work to get their feed the same way you do? Grow their own oats and then have the Coop grind it.

R: Of course, there's a lot of them that bring their bags in to. they don't have it in bulk...just bring bags along, have it ground and put it back in bags and back in their truck and haul it back home.

I: That's kind of inefficient, isn't it?

R: Yeah, it's a little more work. Of course, if you don't have a very big herd, it isn't bad.

I: But the guys that have smaller herds do it that way?

R: Yeah, most of them with smaller herds do

I: You did it until recently, hey?

R: No, we had a bin in the barn

I: Oh, I remember that, yeah. In fact, this new feed tank just sort of adds onto that bin.

R: No...no...we used to have the bin right in the front when you first go in...right there yeah. But that was a chore because when they'd bring it back, he hadda get in there and shovel that stuff around because the size of the batch we had made would just...
barely fit in there.

Stop in tape.

I: Who buys your milk now?

R: It's actually bought by Michigan Milk Producers...I mean, that's where we're paid from.

I: And you are a member of that. How much are your dues...do you pay dues?

R: Yeah right...boy I can't remember off hand...I've got it down in my records...well it depends on how much milk you ship. It's so much per hundred weight and I can't remember exactly how much it was...say maybe like six-seven dollars a month average.

I: And about how much milk do you pump out a month usually?

R: Oh, it varies, but I'd guess it averages about twenty thousand pounds.

I: Okay, they buy from you and they pay you and then they sell it to dairies.

R: Yeah, it goes directly to the dairy.

I: Oh, dairies come and pick it up.

R: Yeah it goes directly to the dairy.

I: Whose the dairy that comes and picks it up generally?

R: Well, it's Jilberts...that's where it goes.

I: Where's their plant located?

R: In Calumet...but they are bringing two or three loads a week to Copper Country Dairy because they run short...they don't have enough so they sell to Copper Country.

I: So, Copper Country Dairy comes around here every now and then.

R: Well, it's the same driver...the same truck picks it up all the time but he just once in awhile drops a load off at Copper Country.

End of Side A
I: Who is the driver around here?
R: Bill Riipi from Tapiola
I: What does he do? He just has his own truck and he...
R: He gets paid by how much milk he ships...the farmers pay him but it's taken right out of the milk shipment...35 cents a hundred weight.
I: He just has his own truck, he doesn't have a fleet.
R: Right...he just has his own.
I: Is that how most of the milk around here is worked?
R: I think so, as far as I know...as far as the bulk milk. I don't know for sure how Copper Country does it. I'm pretty sure they have their own trucks though, these guys that are just hauling.
I: When did you join this Michigan Milk Producers Association or when did it start coming around?
R: Oh boy, you got me. Exactly I'd...
I: Roughly
R: It must be fifteen years
I: Oh, quite a while then
R: Wait a minute, let me see.
I: Thirteen years ago would make it about 1960.
R: I don't think it's about that long...I think it's about eight or ten years...because we just had our annual meeting and I think it was our eighth annual meeting...eighth or ninth. It's around ten years.
I: You belong to one district of that end...this is called what?
R: Lake Superior Local
I: Lake Superior Local and what's the geographical area of that?
R: Let's see, it would cover Houghton, Baraga, Keweenaw, Ontonagon, I think that's the only ones.
I: How many districts are therein Michigan?
R: I think there's around seventeen or eighteen.
I: Now, the milk that is sold, is it consumed in Michigan?
R: Yeah...ours is anyway.
I: I mean, it doesn't go out of state.
R: No...no I don't know about down state if they ship any out or not...I couldn't say.
I: How have the milk prices gone in recent years?
R: Well, they've been going up 'til the last couple years.
I: With the general rise in food costs.
R: Yeah right
I: Approximately now it's...?
R: Well, the base price is around six thirty, something like that per hundred weight.
I: Six dollars and thirty cents per hundred weight
R: Yeah, that's the base...that's for a 3.5 butterfat test and usually...
I: What's 3.5 mean.
R: 3.5 percent butterfat in your milk...each point above that is...right now they've got a butterfat differential...each point above that 3.5 right now runs around eight cents a hundred. Say if your base is six thirty for 3.5 test, say you gotta 4.0 test, that would be five points right there above 3.5...five times eight cents is forty cents. So instead of six thirty, you'd be getting six seventy.
I: So the richer your milk in terms of butterfat, the more you get for it.
R: Right
I: How do they test for your butterfat content?
R: Well, it's done I guess at the plant.
I: Oh, a guy doesn't come around here and do it.
R: No...no that's done...they take a milk sample every day and it's done from that and it isn't tested every day, they do take a sample every day, but it isn't tested every day and they average us out for the whole month, you know, take that average and they also when they take a sample and they do quite often infact almost every day, test it for antibiotics in the milk,
And if there's any antibiotics you lose...you gotta dump your milk automatically.

I: All of it?

R: What's in the tank for twenty-four hours.

I: You told me once before how you can get antibiotics in your milk.

R: By giving them a shot...penicillan shots or shots for mastidous...and you're supposed to leave them without milking for...I mean without using that milk for seventy-two hours on most of the animals with antibiotics...or any medication that is in their bloodstream and could get into the milk. See if it's in their bloodstream it can get into the milk. Or like from mastidous you get it directly into the udder, well you can't use that milk for seventy-two hours even if you only feed one quarter...you can't use the milk from any of the quarters.

I: You're not in the Dairy Herd Improvement Association?

R: No

I: What was the milk price last year? You said it's around...

R: It's around six thirty now and it was around six dollars, maybe a little less last year.

I: And what about the year before? That's two years ago

R: I'd say it was about thirty cents lower, you know

I: So, in the past two years it's gone up about thirty cents per hundred pounds each year.

R: Roughly, yeah roughly...it varies sometimes...it'll be up a little more one month and sometimes a little less, see it's just the law of supply and demand here.

I: And as the population goes up there's more demand.

R: Also during March, April, May and June, you can have an excess of milk. During September, October, November, December they take all the milk you ship and they average it out to so many pounds per day. March, April, May and June, any poundage over that base average is paid an excess price which is less for the reason March, April, May and June, especially May and June when your cows are outside on good grass...they're milking real good, they have a surplus of milk. So this way they're trying to eliminate the surplus by having you get a higher base in the fall...more production in the fall and then less production in the spring so you're kind of averaging your year around production out.
I: So, it's to the farmers advantage then to get a higher production then in the fall so that he won't have so much milk charged him...excess milk.

R: Right...right.

I: How do you try to try to jack up your production in the fall?

R: Well, you usually try to keep your cows freshening in the fall because a cow that calves in the fall is going to milk good all winter and all fall and then...

I: How do you control that? Just by when you have them bred?

R: By when they're bred, yeah. Sometimes it goes later, you can't help it with some almost they repeat or stuff like this, you know. But try to keep the most of them there because that way when they freshen in the fall they milk good throughout most of the winter and they'll probably start tapering off about the time they get outside because they're naturally starting to go dry...you probably have them re-bred and they're starting to go dry at that time, but yet when they get out on the green grass, they're gonna still keep that production up until the time that they calf in the fall again, see.

I: Okay, when you want them to...when you say the word freshen, what does that mean?

R: Calf...just have a calf.

I: Have a calf and how long do you have to wait before then.

R: Well, it's about nine months it takes them.

I: From the point of breeding to...

R: Till they have the calf

I: Just about like a human.

R: Yeah, pretty close.

I: And how long before it can start giving milk again then.

R: What do you mean?

I: Before you can start milking it?

R: Well, after it calves, you start milking it right away.

I: Oh, I thought you couldn't use that milk for...

R: Well, yeah, it's about...they say about seven milkings. But
usually about five milkings it's cleared up.

I: And, you can milk the cow all the way through?

R: Right

I: Right up until it has its calf?

R: No...no...no you usually figure around two months...it runs between a month and two months that they should be without being milked. In time to build up their fat reserves in their body.

I: That's the last two months.

R: Yeah, just before they calf...usually around two months you figure.

I: So you've got to time them so your cows have their calves sometime in what month?

R: Well, anytime around August through December. It's alright to have a few after that even because, like I said, they'd naturally start dropping off a little...you have a few in between there calving and kind of keep that production a little bit steadier throughout the winter.

I: Okay, and then you generally breed them around...?

R: Well, let's see...what would that figure out to?

I: Nine months earlier

R: Yeah, well...around November...December...January...February...even into March but usually you don't care to breed too many like after or middle of April or after.

I: Now the reason the Michigan Milk Producers Association gets this average based on the fall months is to really to control supply...limit supply to keep the price up.

R: Right...well like I said, sort of like incentive for farmers to try to keep that milk up in the fall and down lower in the summer...it kind of averages it out. Like I said, when they get out on the green grass they milk, you know, real good...even if they're getting towards the end of their milking period.

I: Oh, because in the summer months then, you flood the market with too much milk.

R: Yeah right. That's one of the reasons June is dairy month. They try to push a lot of milk in June because there is an excess of milk usually.
I: How do they push it? Just a lot of advertising?

R: Yeah...that's why you've heard them advertising June being dairy month and you know, promoting milk and ice cream or dairy products and that's one of the reasons for it, to try to get some of this surplus moved and keeps the price up too.

Stop in tape.

I: ....work for you or anything for you, or did you...you did some for some of them.

R: Yeah, I did some columbining...custom columbining.

I: Custom columbining?

R: Yeah, that's what you call it when you go out and do work for others, you know...just an expression.

I: And, what you did was you columbined oats, for Norman in this case.

R: Yeah

I: Norman doesn't have a columbine?

R: No

I: You didn't use your chopper, did you?

R: No

I: Just strictly the columbine.

R: Yeah, the columbine

I: What it does it chops the tops of the oats off, right?

R: It cuts the top off and thrashes them out and takes the outside, you know, straw.

I: And leaves the seeds and leaves the straw in wind rows.

R: Yeah

I: Do you generally do this for a lot of farmers around here?

R: I used to do it quite a bit, but not too much anymore because the machine is getting kind of old...I want to just save it for my own use.

I: How old is the machine?

R: It must be at least ten...eleven years old.
I: What does a new columbine run about?
R: Six - seven thousand and more
I: Really...six-seven thousand and who did you used to do it for? When was this that you used to do it and when did you stop?
R: Well, I've been gradually tapering off. I used to do...about five years ago I used to go all over...Elo, Tapiola, mostly up that way but a few around this area...lot of farmers in Pelkie.
I: So you used to really do a lot of it.
R: Yeah
I: What months did...that's early fall, right?
R: Yeah...that's usually around September...August and September
I: Later part of August...beginning part of September?
R: Sometimes middle of September...sometimes even into October not too often though.
I: Depending on the weather.
R: Yeah
I: What farmers did you used to do it for in Pelkie...or what farmers did you used to do it for? I just want to get an idea of the range and distance of how far you...
R: Well, the fartherest I used to go...I used to go up to, oh the other side of Tapiola.
I: Which is about how many miles?
R: It's ten...oh must be about ten miles...that's about the fartherest. Although one time we did go up to Calumet.
I: You had to haul it all the way there?
R: We hauled it on a trailer.
I: By trailer, and used the other guys tractor
R: No, use the dump truck and trailer...trailer behind it...flat bed trailer.
I: Oh, and you pulled the columbine with the dump truck? Is that what you generally do?
R: That's what I did for...about five years ago, but like I said,
I've cut down. I don't even have that trailer anymore because it's just too much wear on the machine.

T: And who'd you do it for in Pelkie?

R: Oh, I used to go to Jolgrens and...

I: Which Jolgren was that?

R: That was Ray Jolgrens, Eino Hills, oh let me think...oh Normans...and Emil Johnson, and John Irwins once in awhile...just different ones.

I: These guys would call you?

R: Yeah

I: What was the rate years ago...about...an hour.

R: Well, let me see. As long as I can remember...years ago we've been getting around eight dollars an hour. They used to figure a dollar foot...for an hour.

I: Eight dollars an hour?

R: For an eight foot cut...eight dollars an hour

I: Oh, you mean on the columbine.

R:

I: It cuts an eight-foot width.

R: Well, I still charge nine, but...you'll have to go up to ten pretty soon. Lot of them are charging quite a bit more than that.

I: What's the general rate? Ten?

R: Well, let's see, Wayne Heikkinen's got that new columbine...that's a ten footer and I think he charges is it fourteen or fifteen...I know.

I: And you're trying to taper this down now.

R: Yeah...down to just the minimum.

I: How come you don't want to do this now? Because...

R: The machine is getting old and it's wearing out and I can't afford seven thousand dollars for a new one. There isn't that much work that it would pay to buy a new machine. It wouldn't pay for itself. The farmers are too far apart and not...too much traveling time, of course you do charge traveling time, but they're are so few and far between, it doesn't pay. If it
was like in the plains states where you go from one farm next door to the other guy...cut a hundred - two hundred acres on each farm, well, there's a lot of guys out there that just have a columbine for that reason of custom work for other people. I mean, maybe they don't do anything else...they don't even farm, maybe...but they go place to place with columbines, but they've got the acreage.

I: So that's, for instance, why Norman doesn't even have one because it almost doesn't even pay to have a columbine because the cost of it is just to damn much, eh?

R: Right, yeah.

I: Like Wayne got a new one and he'll have to do one hell of a lot of columbining to pay for it, eh?

R: Yeah, of course, he has been doing a lot too.

I: He's been taking over...

R: One machine can that can...I mean maybe one or two around here they can pay for themselves; but if more of the farmers started getting big machines like that, well none of them would be able to pay for them...because of the price of it because there just isn't enough work.

I: Is there anyone else that's doing it besides Wayne?

R: There's a fellow up in Chassel that does and well Chester used to do it until he went out of farming.

I: He's going back into it now?

R: No...not that I know of.

I: And you still do it for Norman, though

R: Yeah...if a person's got real good fields and it isn't, you know, real far to drive I do it, but some of the fields are so darn rough...rocks in them and stuff like this, it's just too much wear on the machine especially when it's getting older.

I: Would you have done it for Norman if he weren't a friend of yours and he would have asked you?

R: Yeah, if I knew he had good fields and it's close by...it only takes me about...driving the machine on the road it only takes me ten minutes to get there, so it isn't that bad and he doesn't have that much. Now like if he had a hundred acres, I probably wouldn't do it...when it's just a small amount...twenty acres or something like that...twenty-five or thirty acres it isn't bad.
Stop in tape.
R: Yeah, well you were with me that time I chopped that grass at Rueben's there.

I: Yeah, now what was your problem again.

R: We didn't have enough grass for chopping...see we didn't figure on getting that chopper...it was late in the year and we got it and there wasn't enough fields...we had pastured most of them for the cows and there wasn't enough to chop.

I: And the fields you did have left was wet as I recall.

R: Yeah, and there wasn't much left in it anyways; so I asked if I could rent that from him and he said okay and he wanted me to spray the fertilizer on it. Well, this coming spring though.

I: You went and got a new liquid fertilizer sprayer?

R: No, we've got a sprayer...we use it for weed killing on the oats.

I: Does he have a sprayer?

R: Rueben?

I: Yeah

R: He used to have one, but I think it's broken or worn out or something.

I: So he doesn't have a sprayer but he's got the spray...the chemicals.

R: Yeah, all we have to do it put it in a barrel and spray it out there...use the jeep for spraying.

I: You've just gotta spray it once?

R: Yeah just once.

I: About how long will that take in that field?

R: Oh, I don't know, it shouldn't take long...maybe a half hour.

I: Just wait until you've got a not-very-windy day and do it. Did you get a lot of chopper loads?

R: Yeah, we managed to get just enough...real late in the fall we were feeding hay for them...you know, just before we put them in...we were feeding it outside...feeding hay.

I: Un huh...about how many loads did you get out of there?

R: Out of that field?
I: Yeah...how many days? Well, you'd usually chop once a day.
R: Yeah, I'd chop...I think I chopped two weeks about... in there.
I: That was a pretty rough field too, wasn't it?
R: Yeah, very rough.
Stop in tape.
I: You use some of Sulos.
R: Yeah, we make some hay from Sulos and well give him some for his horses out of that then.
I: How many acres?
R: Oh, I don't know what there was there.
I: How many bales do you usually get out of there?
R: Well, this year there must have been maybe a thousand, twelve hundred.
I: A thousand to twelve hundred bales?
R: Yeah
And then you give him a few bales for his horses
R: A couple hundred or so...around a couple hundred
And what do you do... just leave them out on the field there and he gets them?
R: No, we put them in the wagons and all we have to do is unload them.
I: Does he have a conveyor belt?
R: No
I: You unload them for him?
R: Well, we helped him out, but usually him and Jimmy do it.
we had time there later so we helped him throw them up.
I: You've been doing that for a few years?
R: Well, let's see, yeah two or three years I guess... around three years.
I: And Sulo get's his milk from you.
R: No, he used to
I: He doesn't anymore?
R: No
I: Probably stopped drinking it now that Ruth's not there.
R: I don't know.

Stop in tape.
I: Like one guy couldn't have a mower because when the weather is good, everyone ones got to be mowing strictly at that time. You probably could if you didn't have such a short hay making season, hey?
R: Yeah
I: Does this...is this a short hay making season in comparrison with other places or...?
R: Well, it's colder...that's the thing...I don't know if it's really so much shorter, but definitely the growing season is shorter but I think as far as your summer season, well in most places they have a fairly hot summer...it depends on your rain...the rainfall, and the cold weather. A lot of times it's cold, that's the thing.
I: It doesn't dry in cold weather and it doesn't grow as much either.
R: No
I: So that's the thing...the coldness. If it weren't for that you could probably pull off more of that between the farmers here.
R:

Stop in tape.
I: But your father's father started this farm?
R: When?
I: Oh you'd have to ask my dad that.

Stop in tape.
R: The elbows...you know how many bends you have to make...every-time they make a bend it's twenty-five dollars for an elbow.
I: And they make a lot of bends.
R: Well, in that case I don't think they'd have to. It'd come
straight out of the milk house...see the milk house is right in line with the barn.

I: Which happens to be fortunate.

R: Yeah...see it'll go straight out and make a bend in the barn and go across and make another bend on the other bend and come back then here it'll go back towards the milk house and it'll go back in...see it has to make a complete...

I: So, it's twenty-five dollars for an elbow and probably so much per foot for the pipe line. What does that run?

R: I don't know what that runs.

I: But between thirty-five hundred and forty-five hundred dollars.

R: Yeah, the whole works...and up.

I: Yeah, and up.

R: Like I said, but a lot of it depends on the bends

I: How much time do you think that'll cut down on your milking?

R: Oh, as far as actual milking time, I don't know if it'll cut it too much...might cut it fifteen - twenty minutes. But as far as...well you add on the time it takes to wash the milkers, you can figure fifteen minutes there which you would save because it's automatic. You can get it manual where you've gotta be there too, but there isn't much use of putting it in unless we go automatic...automatic washing...you just flip the switch and it washes the whole thing then. Once a week I guess you do take this chloride units apart and clean them; but other than that, you just set them in your tank there and put your soap in a flip the switch and it's all automatically timed and it washes if for so many minutes and rinses it and I think it sanitizes it too.

I: Okay, now...if...and you said you didn't want to go into much more massive scale, you know like fifty cows or so, but if you wanted to you could with this size of barn, couldn't you?

R: Well, you can't fit anymore cows in this barn as far as for milking.

I: Oh, for the winter problem.

R: Yeah

I: Yeah, but can't you like milk a couple cows and then kick them out.

R: Yeah you could do that, but it's a lot of monkeying around.
And then you got to figure the wintertime, like I said, you've gotta have room for your young animals, you know, for your calves and if you raise any beef animals. You can only fit so many in a barn and that's it.