Family farm vs. mega farm in the USA

Albert De Vries
Department of Animal Sciences
University of Florida
Gainesville, Florida, USA
devries@ufl.edu

Een echt familiebedrijf

In de oude kruidenierswinkel werd iedereen nog persoonlijk geholpen. De generaties door blijkt de winkel van de familie Van Beek een echt familiebedrijf. Want zoons of dochters, er werd geholpen achter de toonbank en/of de kassa. Op de foto: Gerrit, Riek, Henk en Nettie van Beek.
What is the issue?

- Ownership: family vs. corporation?
- Labor: family vs. hired?
- Size: few cows vs. many cows?

Almost all very large US dairy farms are owned by families.
Most employees have families too.
US dairy farm size is increasing

USDA, 2014
2.4% (n=1600) of dairy farms produced 47% of US milk in 2008

Census of Agriculture (2008)
Larger US farms

- Cows identified by numbers, not names
- Less access to pasture
- Standardized operating protocols
- Specialized/trained staff
- A business
Large US dairy farms are more efficient

Mosheim and Lovell (2009) AJAE91
Cost to produce milk in 2012

USDA-ERS, 2014
Health problems

USDA-NAHMS, 2009
Herd size: DHIA (milk test) results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># cows / farm</th>
<th>min</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>51</th>
<th>101</th>
<th>201</th>
<th>501</th>
<th>1001</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>9999</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of farms</td>
<td>2912</td>
<td>4850</td>
<td>2823</td>
<td>1464</td>
<td>463</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>71</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herd size</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>691</td>
<td>1346</td>
<td>3211</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual cull rate, %</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>41</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual death rate, %</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somatic cell count</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>214</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calving interval, months</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual milk yield, kg/cow</td>
<td>8517</td>
<td>9318</td>
<td>9722</td>
<td>10361</td>
<td>11294</td>
<td>11554</td>
<td>11356</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“At Threemile Canyon Farms, we believe that sound business practices and sound environmental practices go hand in hand.”

- 32,000 dairy cows
- 36,000 youngstock
- 860,000 kg milk/day
- 16,000 hectares crops
- >200 employees

http://www.threemilecanyonfarms.com
Oregon, USA
Threemile Canyon Farms
Goals and Expectations

• “Manager: My job is to set the goals, provide training and tools to achieve goals, set critical control points (CCPs) and monitor progress.”

• “Our focus is on prevention (vaccines, cow comfort, nutrition, critical control points)”

• “It is not normal for cows to get sick or to die.”

• “Its about nutrition and management.”

• “We undergo a twice a year animal welfare audit.”

• “Antibiotics and hormones are not looked upon well by the general public and are a risk to our operation.”
a US view: larger dairy farms ...

- Are the future
  - Profitable, efficient, sufficient cow welfare
  - Small farms may survive
- Fit in landscape: large open spaces
- Match American attitude of growth, self-reliance, rewarding success