



Mr. Ben Molina with son Mark milking the cows

Mr. Benjamin Molina or "Mang Ben" is now considered as the "mentor" of the local dairy industry. An experienced dairyman who put theory into practice and makes innovation adaptable to Philippine dairy settings. He is well remembered from a very simple tips in teaching small hold dairy farmers to use local rice hull as bedding for calves to prevent pneumonia and scouring and minimize mortalities in the dairy herd specifically the calves, to advocating forage and pasture development for better farm management and practice to minimize cost of production and to a more complicated aspect in improving the genetics of dairy animals.

Indeed, Mang Ben is truly an epitome of modern dairy farmer who viewed dairying as a business with a "corporate mind set". The success of Mang Ben as dairyman is no secret being an educator who taught in the academe during his younger years in the province of Catanduanes. Then in Oman, KSA, he also taught dairying before he became a fulltime dairyman here in the Philippines. Mang Ben never stopped in teaching the dairy farmers, students and beginners during seminars and educational tours (lakbay-aral) conducted in his farm located in Malvar, Batangas. His desire to contribute more in the industry can be gleaned in his works.

It is very interesting to note that being landless in this part of the region is never an issue for Mang Ben. He has been into developing two farms before he landed in Battings. First in San Pablo City where he leased with a partner in 1999 when 25 pregnant dairy animals from the National Dairy Authority (NDA). Even at the very beginning Mang Ben is very astute in his chosen career. He invested his hard earned, money, time and effort. The land that he was leasing lasted for only two. He found a much larger area in Dolores, Quezon and invested a lot of money in forage and pasture development, structures, machines, time and effort but his stay in Dolores, Quezon is not long enough to get even with his investments.

With strong desire to continue dairying he was able to lease a 55 hectare farm land located in Malvern, Battings. Despite the odds, his herd is still increasing. Started with 25 in late 1999, now he has a total herd inventory of ninety seven (97), fifty of these animals are milking with an average of 14 liters a day per animal. That gives him an average of 700 liters a day valued at P12, 600 at P18.00 per liter farm gate price.

The "Tropical Dairy Farm" of Mang Ben is now more of a family enterprise: he works with his wife, a retired school teacher, with his son Dr. Neil Molina, a Veterinarian who now works in a dairy farm in New Zealand but still a part of the business, with his other son, Mark Molina a licensed Mechanical Engineer who set up machines operated in the farm and designed the milking parlors and the alternate of Mang Ben. Mang Ben is busy now in assisting National Dairy Authority in setting-up a Breeder Farm in Calauan, Laguna as source of genetically improved breed of dairy animals for dairy development.

Mang Ben is so proud that the milk he produces in the farm is one of the best and the cleanest In Batangas His milk is being collected daily by the Batangas Agribusiness Center in Lipa City that supplies one of the leading coffee shops in the country today.