

## Monico and Editha Vanzuelo

Valencia, Dumaguete City

By : Ching M. Lumanta

Nice cow pens. Abundant forage, clean surroundings...name it.. the couple has it. Yet they seem so bothered because the cows that they have are all mastitic. One of the cows is an early leaker, the other has umbilical hernia, one suckles her own teats... if these are not problems, what are they then?

Despite these setbacks in their loaned animals, they could not care much less but bemoan the fact that they do not have enough money to boot. However, they are still a happy lot. Smiles can still be gleaned in their faces. The children, all good looking, take turns in caring for and milking their animals who have by now totaled to 13: 4 original dams with 9 offspring. All their animals are called by their pet names namely: Inday (ETN 390) – has hernia; Nene (ETN 1192) has 4 defective teats; Rina (ETN 1180) aside from having 2 defective teats suckles her own milk; Shiela ( ETN 1195) has 3 defective teats and the remaining teat is mastitic. They do not get much in terms of milk production from dairy. Summing up their production, the family only gets 18-19 liters.

But their animals are well taken cared of. Shiny coats, robust bodies with spic n' span surroundings. All their children: Jane ( now married) and have their own animals too; Monico Jr. (31 ) ; Cherry Mae (16) and Edric (13) help in taking care of the dairy animals. Charlegmagne ( a male calf) the latest addition to the herd also has umbilical hernia.

The lot area surrounding their house and nearby milking parlour made from local materials is planted to napier, some 2 hectares all in all and another hectare to centrosema and madre de cacao. They also buy sugarcane bagasse for Php 270/sack.

All seems well for the Vanzuelo family. They feel happy looking at their animal holdings. Their animals are so much a part of the family. The calves roam around the premises. Special mention to Charlemagne who wants to be petted most of the time. Whenever there are guests coming over, he makes sure he is properly acknowledged. If only these animals could talk, surely, they emote a sense of belongingness to the Vanzuelos. For who might not be, if you are treated as part of the family? They may not have the cash at the moment, but anytime they need it, the calves can be sold.

Cash vis-a viz dairy animals, the Vanzuelos' love for their herd supersedes their concern for the defects their cows have. They just hope that the next time the animals calve, the new offspring will not have the same problems their sires and dams have.

The we'll say mooohhh to that then.....!

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