

**BEN LAGUNDAY**  
Antique Dairy Farmer

Ben Lagunday is one of fifteen dairy farmers of the Belison Multi-Purpose Cooperative in Antique.

Unlike many first-time farmers who confidently leap into dairy production, their confidence generated by what to them is enough experience, Ben started with apprehension, knowing that he had cows to tend to, with no experience at dairy farming and an animal loan to pay. Day after day he had to wrestle with the nagging worry of "mahirap kaya mag alaga ng dairy cow?" And the more important question : "Kaya ko kaya?"(Can I do it?)

But after taking the Basic Dairy Husbandry Training conducted by the National Dairy Authority for first timers, Ben became more confident and happier especially when he produced milk which he was able to sell later on.



While he works as the driver and messenger for the Belison Cooperative, he also manages four cows, two of which are on the milk line. Ben has not yet felt any difficulty in dairy, although getting more forage especially during the dry season can be a problem.

From the ten liters he produces each day, he keeps two for family use, especially for the wife who suffered a nervous breakdown and for their four children. He worries over their youngest child (a first year high school girl), who has taken so much to fresh milk that Ben worries if she might become overweight. He was reassured however when he was told that a growing girl needs the best food and an almost complete food like milk will be of great help to his daughter.

He hopes too that his eldest child will take a course in Dairy Technology or Food Technology and help in improving Antique's dairy industry.

The rest of the morning produce is bought by the Polytechnic College of Antique, Hamtic Campus and processed in Antique's lone milk processing plant into fresh and flavored milk labeled "Antique's Pride".

Afternoon milk is sold at 60.00 per liter to neighbors and to Hindu migrants in the locality who buy as much as five liters per visit. A special price of P40.00 per liter is granted for relatives.

Before he ventured into dairy, Ben was deep in debt. The money he earns from dairy has helped pay off his loans and his children's tuition

His wife, Rosalyn, who suffered a nervous breakdown some years back, now milks his animals finding the activity cathartic and healing. If the situation allows, Ben would rather focus on dairy and resign from his driving and delivery job. He plans to add more milking cows.

Early into his dairy venture, Ben has decided to consistently feed his animals with forage rich in crude protein and other nutrients. This came after he found how customers can be discriminative and learn to pick which farmer's milk produce is watery, preferring the creamy taste of Ben's milk produce. Ben hopes to maintain his good standing with customers and in the process, always be part of Antique's pride.

Farina Sanchez- Dy- Information Officer - VIO