

All the fears went away

Basically it started in 1998. We had a fire. We lost all of our original buildings and then we built a freestall and we started milking a barn and a half worth of cows by myself. And it's like, I can't do this anymore by myself. And then we had one full time, actually, two American elderly guys working on the farm. And they both, at 65 said "You know, I'm all done." And then I tried to advertise for help and look for help and you get the guys that would come for a week or ten days and "Oh, I don't like this job" or they don't come in the morning, show up in the afternoon. And then somebody introduced me to one of, another farmer who had Hispanic workers, and they said, "Ah, why don't you try one?" And then there's like all the fear runs through your mind of how am I going to communicate? What if they don't do this? Blah, blah, blah, you know, and then you got to have a place, they got to have a place to live. And so originally we started with one house, off farm. And I had to pick them up at 3:30 in the morning and bring them to work, bring them back home, pick them up, bring them back home. I did that through one winter. And then we, the American that was working for me, got done—who was living in the employee housing building. And then when he left, we got two other employees, Hispanic employees, and put them on the farm. And it's been—after that first initial six months, all the fears went away until one Sunday night. And I think it was late in September. We came home from church and the barn lights weren't on and it's like "Hmm, no lights in the house, no lights in the barn." So maybe they overslept. And I got a phone call about 20 minutes later from St Albans Correctional that said "Uhh, you need to milk your own cows cause we in jail. And I.N.S. had been to the house, opened the door, walked in and took the guys right out of the house.