

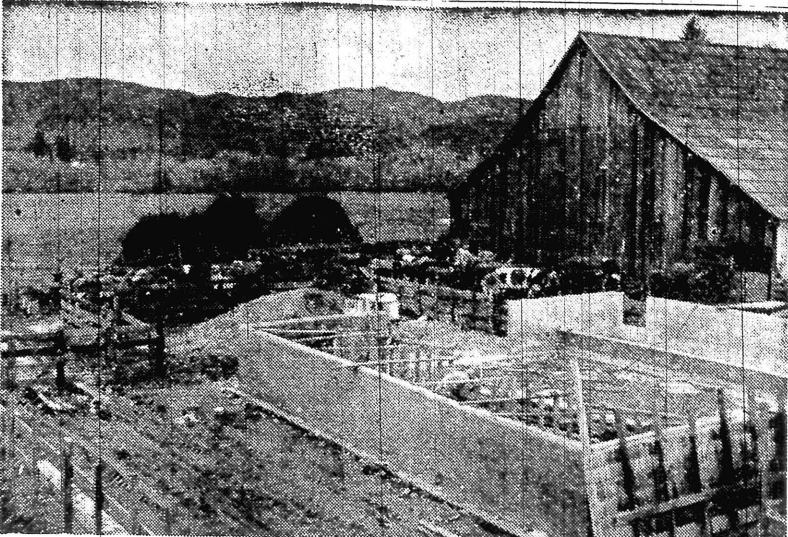
# A Day at One of Humboldt's Developing Dairy Ranches



"No, no, musn't do!" The Silva family focus their attention upon Luke, the dog, momentarily. Shown are Domingo and Mary Silva and their children, Lois (left), Don, Betty, Joyce, Arlene, Marjorie, and baby Alice in trundler.



Stand still, you rascal! Neighbor Virginia Moller and Joyce pose restless calf for Photographer Ryan.



Part of the Silva ranch's inspiring view. Their broad acres sweep all the way down to Mad river—where fishing's good! In foreground is the new grade A barn and milkhouse under construction.

## Domingo Silva and Family, of Blue Lake Look Ahead and Plan Progressive Business and Herd

BY CHET SCHWARZKOPF  
PHOTOS BY DICK RYAN

Domingo Silva and his personable wife, Mary, are happy and fortunate people. But nobody gave them their happiness and good fortune. Domingo and Mary are earning it, day by day, in the best of American tradition. And they are king and queen of their own kingdom on a prosperous 259 acre dairy ranch at Blue Lake.

The Silvas work hard, for Domingo and his assistant Joe Benzoni take care of a herd of 110 fine Guernsey cattle, 70 of which are milking, while 40 more are young stock they are raising for the inevitable replacements as well as expansion.

And Mary Silva runs the household for her husband and their seven lively, well-mannered children.

The Silvas have something to live and work for—and they are getting the most out of every day of life. "The rolling acres that comprise their ranch are set in one of Mad river valley's exotic stretches, with the river below, and the redwood hills of Humboldt at their backs. Nor are the Silvas ever too busy or preoccupied to stop for a moment and call the visitor's attention to their wonderful view—as if the visitor hadn't noticed it already!

There is no hustling business go-getter tension on the Silva ranch. Those people love and appreciate their land. And who has better right to own land? A Russian type government would have a bad time taking a place away from people like the Silvas and putting them on a collective farm. A very bad time indeed—

for the Silvas' land belongs to them . . . and the Silvas belong to their land. Of such is the spirit of free America—lest we forget.

### LET'S MEET THE FAMILY

"Before we start on the Silvas' ranch business, let us get acquainted with them—the better to understand what they are doing.

Domingo was born in Arcata, and raised on the Silva "home" ranch, just north of 101 highway bridge alongside Mad river. He went to Arcata high school, but didn't have time to finish. He speaks of this just a little wistfully. "Dad needed us boys on the ranch," he said, "so we went to work. Maybe if I'd had more education . . . but never mind. Every one of my youngsters is going to get the best. That's what my wife and I are working for. Things are more advanced now days, and it can be done."

Domingo's parents came over from St. George Island, in the Azores, in 1886. Like all new immigrants to America, they had a long pull to get where they did. But they carried through, and at their deaths, left the home ranch to sons Domingo and Bill.

But there wasn't enough land on the home place for two ambitious men to do all they wanted. So Domingo sold his half to Bill five years ago, and bought the big ranch above Blue Lake. And he has done wonders to it since that time.

Quite-spoken Domingo Silva smiles as he talks. "I ought to know the dairy business if I'm ever going to," he says, "for I've been at it since 1920. This place is our ideal—our life's work. Some day—and not too long either—it'll be among the best. We're building and planning every day."

The Silva residence provides an example of Domingo's building and planning, for he has remodeled it completely since buying the ranch, and it is as white and spick-and-span as the traditional New England farmhouse—complete with garden and ornamental fence.

Mary Silva is proud of her children, her husband, and her home. A native Humboldt, she was born at Elk River, but raised

in Ferndale—a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Anton Oliver. And she is the center of life for her husband and children. The moment you step into the door and see her well-ordered and electrically run household, you know that here is a happy, well-balanced family. Not that the best in refrigerators, washing machines, ironers, and the like can make a home happy . . . but rather, these adjuncts are a manifestation—an effect, rather than a cause.

The older Silva children have come home from school, so here's a chance to meet them all as they ask photographer Dick Ryan how his big flash-bulb camera works. Eldest is Marjorie, aged 12, who is already her mother's "right hand man" around the home.

Next is Joyce, age 10, then seven-year old Arlene, followed by Lois, age 5, and sparkling-eyed Betty, of four. Only son in the family is Don, a roly-poly chap just turned three, while the baby is seven-month-old Alice. And not to be overlooked is deep-voiced Luke, the Silva's reliable dog, who stands guard over the children and supervises the visitors with tolerant eyes.

And now, after a glass of excellent home-made wine with Domingo Silva, let's look at his ranch and ask questions.

### A GOING CONCERN

Domingo is a man in business for himself. He sells milk. And in order to do that, he runs a complete production line. His fertile land produces beets, clover hay, and corn. The beets are a rooted crop, he explains, and go deep enough for their own water supply. But the clover fields and corn rows require irrigation, and water for them is supplied by an electric-driven well on the ranch. "We get our domestic water from the same well," states Domingo. "It is soft and very pure—seeps down from the hills above. All this area has a fine water supply. I checked on that before buying the ranch."

For feed, the Silva herd gets a mixture of corn, cottonseed, linseed, and mill-run bran; as well as beets and clover hay. And the results are good, for the ranch produces as high as 250 gallons of milk per day in the summer, and never goes below 150 gallons in winter. "Right now is the turn of the tide, so to speak," Domingo explains. "The cows all freshen in February and March. Later, when I get into grade-A production, I plan to have them freshen the year 'round to avoid fluctuations in production."

What is grade-A production? he is asked.

"That means that the milk will go to the consumer direct," Rancher Silva says. "Creameries will pasteurize and bottle it for delivery to people's homes. The milk I produce now is manufactured into butter, ice cream, powdered milk, cheese, and the like. I sell it to the Golden State creamery in Arcata.

"But . . ." and he warms to his subject, "when I get this dairy into the grade-A class, that will be a definite step ahead. That is why I'm building a new reinforced concrete grade-A milk house and barn. That will meet the higher technical requirements in milk handling, so to speak."

Construction is well under way on the new unit now, and its owner expects to have it in operation by summer. As you look it over, you realize that here is a man who is planning and working for many years ahead—for the job he and his side-kick Joe are doing is itself "grade-A."

The Silva ranch already has three barns, which are used both for sheltering and milking cows, and storing hay and implements. All milking is mechanically done and, according to Domingo and Joe, handling 70 cows is not too great a chore.

"They are milked twice a day," Domingo says. "At 5 a. m. and 5 p. m., respectively, to keep them on a 12 hour schedule. The milk house we now have is satisfactory and, with its electric sterilizer, handles our production without trouble." He glances toward the concrete walls of the new unit. "But when we get that one finished, I'd like you to drop in and see it after it gets running."

### MODERN EQUIPMENT

You comment again on the almost complete use of electricity on the Silva ranch, and Domingo's smile is catching. Yes, he explains, they even have a radio in the barn! Almost all work in the fields is done by tractor, he adds, but he keeps two horses. One is the family saddle horse—"The kids like to ride"—and the other is his "cultivating" horse, for garden and corn rows.

Pride of the Silva ranch is its purebred registered Guernsey bull—an animal worth at least \$1,000, according to its owner. The herd's sire was obtained from Hoard's Dairy farm at Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin, when a six-months' old calf, and raised on the Silva ranch. It is the second bull obtained from the Wisconsin source. It pays to get the best," Domingo states simply. "This way, I am constantly building my herds up. Some day I will have a fine strain of my own. That's another of the things we're working toward."

Domingo is a believer in returning as much to the land as possible in the way of fertilizer. In this connection, he has rigged up an ingenious manure pit of concrete, in which an agitator is driven by tractor power to mix water and washout from the barn. This mixture then runs by gravity through a large pipe to a tractor-drawn wagon pickup on the road below, whence it is hauled to the clover fields and distributed. "It is simple enough," Domingo adds. "And it works with a minimum of grief."

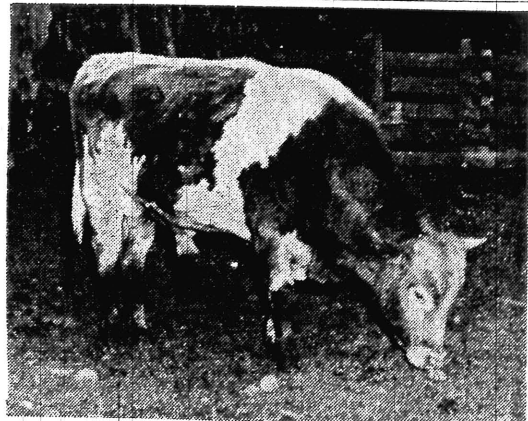
Washings from the grade-A barn, which will accommodate 20 milking cows, also will run into this pit. Everything is thoroughly flushed out after each milking, the dairyman explains. Sanitation is his constant intent, and all new additions to his shipment are planned with this point foremost in mind.



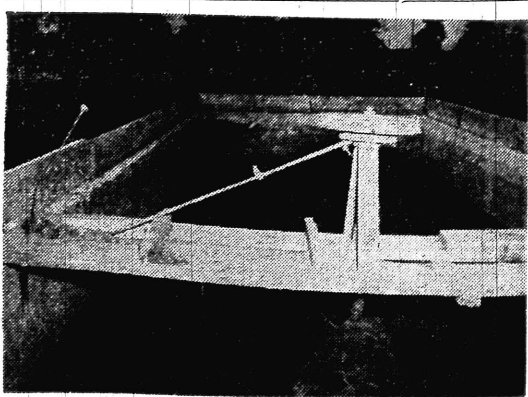
Don and Betty Silva are guarded by Luke, their dog.



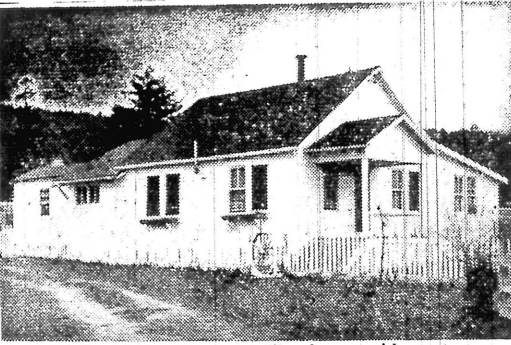
Milking time—Domingo Silva is careful and sure.



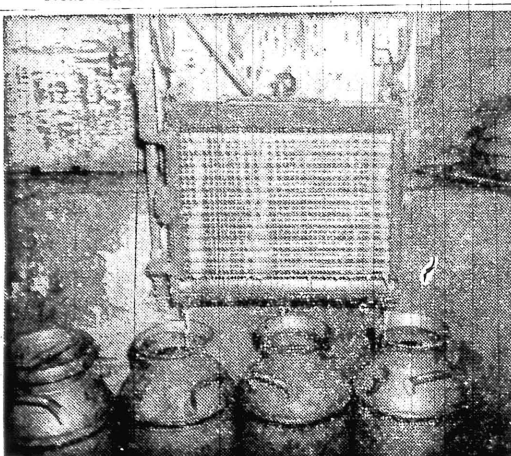
Mr. Big, the Silva dairy's registered Guernsey bull.



Old auto differential and shaft makes ingenious mixer.



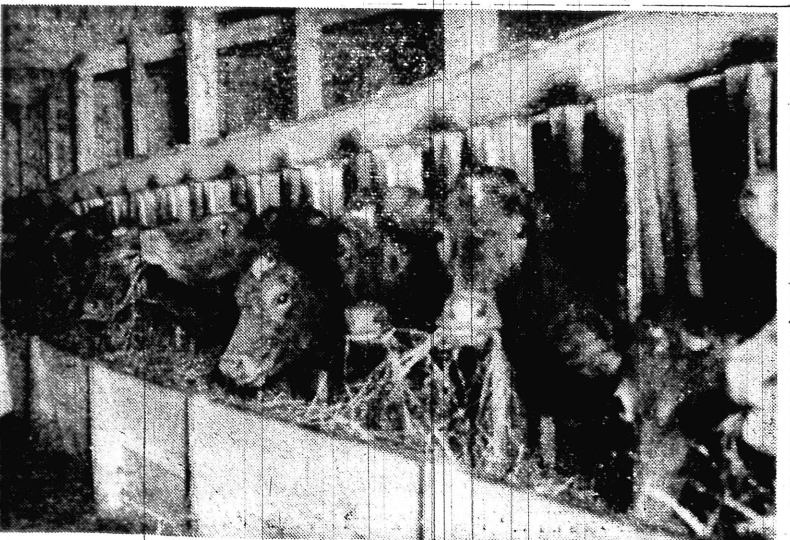
Neat and attractive is the Silva home, with garden.



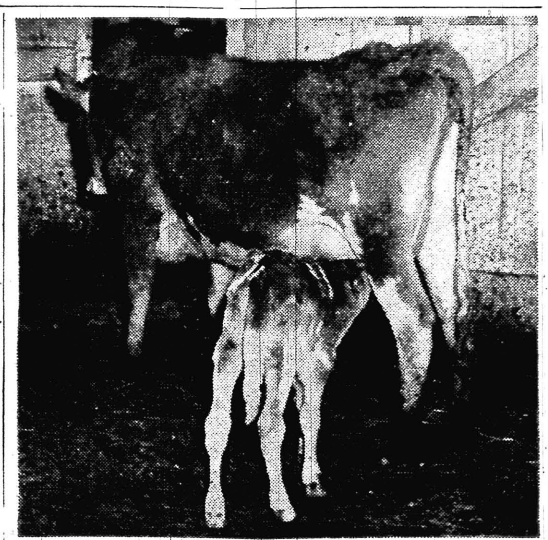
Brand-fresh milk being cooled; Silva dairy.



Three of the Silva girls (center) and neighbors frolic in hayloft.



Come and get it, gals! Part of the Silva herd at feeding time.



Feeding time again—in the old-fashioned way.

(Please turn back to P. 24, Oct. 2)