



DAVE'S DAIRY

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Monday. I've been reading in my new book how to keep farm accounts properly. I must admit the author does things different to me. My system is handy in some ways, but I must admit there's a certain amount of trouble when I come to do my income tax. But this is my system. I just have a large tin trunk, and in it I place everything. It's handy like that; whenever you want to find anything you don't have to look up a lot of books -you just look in the tin trunk. This saves a lot of trouble – sometimes! The children use it to keep their toys in, too, and if Mary finds anything when she is sweeping, she puts it in the trunk. Then the day comes when I can no longer put off filling in my income tax form, so I carry the trunk up to the passage and tip the contents out on the floor. Every year I think: "Now, I'll use a bit of system this time." So first I divide the mess up into heaps, one business papers, another children's toys, another letters I have forgotten to answer, another family photos (a lovely one of Mary at six months). This all takes a bit of time, but is worth it. Then the youngest kid comes in and accuses me of pinching his toys, and starts to yell and Mary sings out from the kitchen, "Stop teasing the child, Dave!" Eventually I persuade the little devil to go out to the veranda, but when he opens the door the wind comes in and blows all the papers together again. so I lock the door and start again. Then I remember that I had left some receipts in one of my coat pockets, so have a look through all my clothes and drawers. This takes time, because I am gradually losing my temper and am starting to throw things about. Then I go and ask Mary and she says she put the papers in the tin trunk when she was cleaning my suit. So back I go to it again and find the kitten has been having fun. I'll kill the kitten!

Then I get the pile of business papers and divide it into two heaps, one (very small) account sales and the other (very large) receipts. Then I remember I made a note on the back of a matchbox and go off to look for that. Then Mary comes in to tidy up and puts everything back in the tin trunk.

After a short but bitter interval, I have another shot and gradually get it in some kind of order. By the end of the day I've got the form half filled in, my temper in rags, the children cowed and Mary rebellious.

So, as this is the start of another financial year, I am going to have a go at doing my books the way my book says. But Mary says I cannot have a secretary!

Tuesday. Another lovely day. The grass is starting to grow at last/ Perhaps we've touched bottom at last/ We've been short of feed for a year now and it will be a strange feeling having enough/ We've been sowing malt barley and it's going in well.

Wednesday. We finished seeding today. Now we've got to harrow the last two paddocks and the job is done. I had a yarn with Clarkson on the phone just now. I told him we were nearly finished seeding and that we were going to start ploughing almost straight away. He wouldn't hear of it. He said I could plough up a small paddock for Sudan grass or rape if I liked, but I was mad if I went on fallowing for next year's wheat. He said that people in this district ought not to be allowed to make good fallow, as the finer the fallow, the more it washes away. He says that these fallowing competitions that they have in some districts are just asking for

trouble. He would rather have a bag less per acre and keep his soil. He says he would rather see soil conservation competitions than fallowing competitions. Then he went on to ask how my new dam was, but I hung up.

Thursday. We tailed the lambs today. I would have done it before, but the lambs were too weak. I borrowed Clarkson's de-tailer because I didn't want to lose any of the few lambs I had left. It is certainly a good instrument; they hardly bleed at all. But there's a terribly small percentage; only 27%. I don't know what the bank manager will say.

I've been having a good bit of trouble keeping the sheep off the wheat. They are still very hungry and the wheat is growing nicely, and the fence is not good/ They don't all get through, but there are about twenty real rogues who would get out of gaol. Clarkson says it's a matter of how they have been brought up. I remember one year we had put up a temporary fence to keep the ewes off some peas, and we didn't take it all down. I didn't worry about it, but a few ewes started walking through the fence, instead of walking round. It didn't seem very serious to me, but I remember my poor old Dad saying, "What the deuce is this, Dave -a blinking gymnasium?"

Friday. There was a big clearing sale near here today. I badly wanted to go, to have a yam with some of the chaps, but Mary wouldn't let me. She said that if I went to the sale I just wouldn't be able to help buying something which I didn't want, or if I did want it, I wouldn't be able to afford it. She says I buy things because I like hearing my name sung out. I'm afraid there's something in what she says. So I stopped home and patched up a fence near the road so that people could say, "Look at poor old Dave, working as usual." But I felt it was worth it when the bank manager went tootling past. I think I will give him a ring tomorrow about an increase in my overdraft. I wish I could buy a hundred-weight of decent soft No. 10 wire. Whenever I go fencing I have to use any old bits I can find. I have some new high tensile wire, and it's all right for using in a fence but it's no good for straining up.