

Working Amish

The Schlabach's in Ontario own one of the largest farms in their settlement. The main responsibility lays on Joseph, the father in the house. His wife Edna has her own fabric store in one of the larger rooms in their house. She sells fabrics mainly used in the making of Amish clothes and quilts, but the store has both Amish and non-Amish customers. The couple has eleven children, ages of nine months to twenty-four years old. The two oldest boys have moved out, and established their own households on land not too far away from their parents. They are still members of the same settlement. Whenever they have time to spare, they return to their parents' farm to help. The children who are still living at home also help out a lot. The younger girls help their mother in babysitting the smaller children while the other children help their father in the barn. The barn is full of Belgian horses that are rarely out in the fields. Each horse has its own booth. A long tube leads from the horse's abdomen to a smaller bucket behind each horse. The Amish farmer collects the horses' urine. They empty the buckets as they get full. The urine is then sold to a pharmaceutical company. The urine is a necessary ingredient in producing certain medication such as oral contraceptives.

In a smaller settlement in Ontario, two grown sons are still living at their father's farm. The youngest one is married and lives in a smaller house attached to the main house (what will become the doddyhaus). They have four younger sisters also living at home. Dairy cows are their main occupation at the farm. The farm belongs to their parents and they are the ones who profit from the work. Still, the grown and younger children are all helping out. But the households are particular in their own way. The sons have established their own contractor company, run with two non-Amish boys. A larger company hires them, and they do work in several places in Ontario. The co-operation works out quite well. As the work demands some travelling, the non-Amish boys drive the crew in his car. But only one son is working at a time. The other one is needed at the farm, and therefore they choose to work in shifts. Although they have established a good monetary income through this work, there might come a day when they have to choose between the two production regimes. Their parents might retire in a few years, and both sons will be needed to run the farm. They are both willing to give up their newest job. If they have to make a choice it will not be difficult since both of them prefer farming.