



**Nothing changes!**

The following extract is from “Hodge and His Masters” written by Richard Jeffries in 1879. Mr Jeffries was a Wiltshire farmer’s son who worked for the local newspaper until his death aged 38.

These wet days, forcing him unwillingly to stay withindoors, send him into his books and accounts, and they tell a story somewhat at variance with the prevalent belief that dairy farming is the only branch of farming that is still profitable. First, as to the milk selling. Cows naturally yield a larger supply in the summer than in the winter, but by the provisions of the contract between the farmer and the milkman the quantity sent in summer is not to exceed, and the quantity in the winter not fall short of, a stipulated amount. The price received in summer is about fivepence or fivepence-halfpenny per imperial gallon, afterwards retailed in London at about one shilling and eightpence.

The work is hard, or rather it is continuous. No one has to attend to his duties so regularly all the year round as the man who looks after cows. They can not be left a single day from January 1<sup>st</sup> to December the 31<sup>st</sup>. Nor is the social state of things altogether pleasant to reflect on. His sons and daughters have all left home; not one would stay and take to the dairy work. They have gone into the towns and found more congenial employment there. He is himself growing in years. His wife, having once left off making cheese when the milk selling commenced, and having tasted the sweets of rest, is unwilling to return to that hard labour.

The language may be dated but the sentiments all too familiar.