

Does Type Tell? How Much Will She Produce

Using production records to select dairy breeding stock is the fastest way to build high-producing, money-making herds. Dairy type or physical appearance is valuable chiefly in eliminating obvious abnormalities.

These conclusions come from a USDA study of research results obtained in the past quarter century. They show a need for more emphasis on production records and less on the traditional score card classification.

The study included analyses of data on Holstein-Friesian, Jersey, and Ayrshire cattle reported by agricultural experiment station workers in Wisconsin, West Virginia, Iowa, Illinois, and Canada. It is part of a larger study, now nearing completion, by ARS dairy husbandman N. D. Bayley and associates to determine the influence of type on milk production, longevity, and merchandising value.

The scientists found only a slight relationship between dairy-type score (Excellent, Very Good, Good Plus, Good Fair) and production ability. Many cows with high dairy-type classifications are high producers at least partly because they get better feed and care. This tends to exaggerate type-production relationships, especially when evaluations are based on production averages for cows in different herds.

Slight Relationship Shown by Record Check

For example, Holstein records showed a difference in average butterfat yield of 11.4 percent between all cows rated Excellent and those rated Good Plus. But a Wisconsin analysis of records of 45,000 Holstein cows showed a difference of only 6.7 percent between the Excellent and Good Plus cows in the same herd. The lower percentage ruled out feed and management differences and more nearly reflects the true and low relationship between type score and production.

The analysis also showed that production cannot be predicted on the basis of type rating. On the average, prediction of butterfat misses actual production by as much as 69 pounds. This error is greater than the entire difference of 60 pounds between the lowest (Fair) and the highest (Excellent) type cows in the herds studied by Wisconsin workers.

Of the components that make up a type score, dairy character appears most closely associated with production. Bayley estimates that selection on dairy character alone is about four times as effective in raising milk yield as is selection on total type score. Progress is still less than half as fast, however, as it is when selection is based on single lactation records. Used with production records, dairy character increases breeding progress by 2 or 3 percent, compared with only 0.4 of 1 percent when total type score is used.

Dairy Character is Difficult to Describe

A serious drawback to dairy character as a selection tool is difficulty in describing it exactly. Many judges consider dairy character as "general appearance for milkiness," but their interpretations vary widely. The scientists found greater variation in scores for dairy character than for any other type component.

Some traits associated with a heavy milker—thin, angular body and full, distended udder—may be the result rather than cause of high production. Also, well fed animals tend to show less of these traits than poorly fed animals with similar

yielding ability. However, since dairy character does have some use in estimating production of lactating cows without records, an objective definition is urgently needed.

What do these research findings mean to commercial dairymen? Bayley sums up like this: Dairymen with average or low-yielding herds should concentrate on better management and selection on the basis of production records. Those who have built highly productive herds through good management and selection based on production records, should recognize that if they now desire to select for improved type, they must go slower in increasing milk and butterfat production.

Bayley believes that when dairymen become more aware of the slight relationship between type and production, they will give much less importance to type.

Since 1945, the marketing margin on food is up 93 percent. The farm value of food has risen only 16 percent.

International Grand Champion Brings \$16,725

Chicago—Pretty Kaye Pollock, the 15 year old Iowa high school girl, sold her grand champion steer for \$16,725 with mixed emotions. She was nappy with the price but broken hearted over losing a pet.

"I'm glad but I'm sad," Kaye said. Her 1,115 pound Hereford, named Hercy, was

adjudged grand champion of the 1960 International Live Stock Exposition.

The auctioning of Kaye's champion was replete with gimmicks and fanfare. But the sale price of \$15 a pound was only half the exposition record price set in '57.

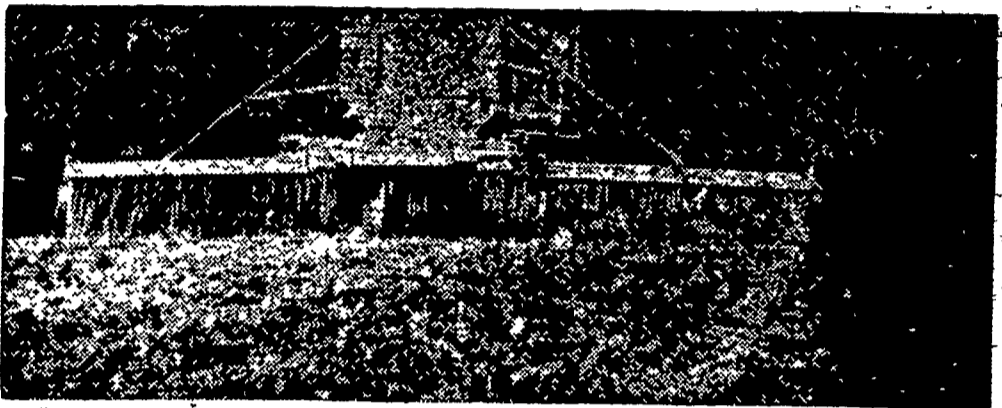
Veteran cattlemen attributed the relatively moderate price to Hercy's weight, well over 1,000 pounds, and the absence of spirited bidding among several potential buyers interested in acquiring a grand champion for publicity purposes.

The International's reserve grand champion steer, a 1,074 pound Aberdeen-Angus named P. S. Maximilian entered by Pennsylvania State University, was sold for \$225 a pound. The buyer was the Village Inn, Allentown.

The top female, consigned by Pennsylvania State University, was bought for \$2,500 by R. T. Scofield, Westfield, N. Y.

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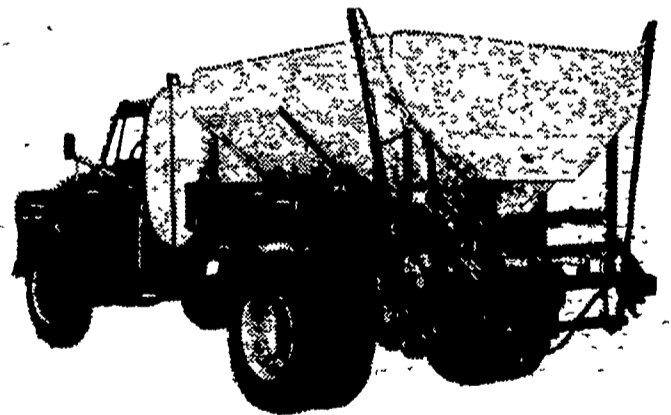
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