

## Functional Efficiency and Crossbreeding Emphasized at Charolais Meeting

Functional efficiency--the ability of a bull to sire high-performing offspring, cows that will calve easily and regularly, and cattle that finish with high cutability and quality--will be the keystone of beef production in the future.

What's more, with a predicted continued upswing in crossbreeding, top commercial cattlemen will be selecting bulls on their individual performance merit, not by breed.

This was the underlying philosophy of a battery of speakers at the Worldwide Charolais Breed Improvement Seminar in Dallas recently at the 8th annual convention of the International Federation of Charolais Host for the convention was American-International Charolais Assn. of Houston, the breed's registry in this country.

Further beneath those tones were well-directed comments that for Charolais to continue its leadership role and the preferred sire breed in crossbreeding, the breed will have to continue to expand its performance leadership in order to provide commercial cowmen with clean, high-performing bulls.

In attendance at Dallas, Texas, were Charolais breeders from the U.S., Canada, Mexico, France, England, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Rhodesia, Argentina, and other countries.

It was DeBaca who emphasized "functional efficiency" as such in beef cattle "There is nothing more rewarding than to see a calf born alive, get up to suck and grow and grow," he declared.

"The Iowan called for breeders to 'rank cows and cull the infertile; rank cows on reproduction; rank calves on growth; and evaluate sire on progeny tests to foster 'functional efficiency'."

His sentiments were echoed by other speakers during the seminar, including Dr. O.D. Butler, chairman of Texas A and M University's animal science department, who predicted continued increases in popularity of crossbreeding.

"The Charolais breed has provided bulls that have sired steers with the desired traits (in beef production) -- gainability and cutability," he declared.

"Increasing popularity of the breed, in my opinion has been due almost entirely to the desirability of crossbred steers sired by Charolais bulls," he continued. "First, carcass shows all over the country were dominated by the crossbred Charolais steers, and now the live steer shows are frequently won by them."

Butler warned, however, that 'Charolais breeders must not rest on their laurels. Top commercial cattlemen today are selecting bulls on individual merit, not just by breed. It is essential, therefore to continue genetic selection of the purebreds that go into a cross."

Arguing that crossbreeding would not eliminate the purebred or seedstock producer, Dr. Butler pointed out that crossbreeding may well increase the demand for purebred cattle, as a large percentage of purebreds is necessary to support production of hybrids.

Dr. BeBaca also pointed to the

Charolais breed, which, with accumulating heterosis data, finally legitimized crossbreeding in the U.S. These successes at the same time opened the doors to American importation of full-French Charolais and numerous other "new" breeds from Europe, including the Simmental, Limousin, Maine-Anjou and others.

But, he said, "the shakedown of these breeds will be accomplished through performance evaluation. The 'dollar making test' will determine which breeds stay and which will taste the salt of the seas on their way back to whence they came."

Dr. T.M. Sutherland, genetics specialist at Colorado State University, pointed to the history of genetic defects in beef cattle, stating that all breeds--and all species of living things--have deleterious genes in their genetic make-up.

Any bad gene, he said, is present in only a few animals, but

there are so many bad genes possible that virtually all animals in all breeds carry a few bad genes. Trouble arises, he said, when the two animals mated both carry the same bad gene and then there is a 25 per cent chance of throwing a defective offspring.

The Coloradoan commended the American-International Charolais Assn, which hosted the conference, for its very enlightened and far-sighted approach" in recognizing some genetic problems within the breed and in mounting a strong educational program to aid breeders in getting rid of the problem as fast and as painlessly as possible.

For control of recessive genes, Sutherland recommended the same practices which controls dwarfism and other defects in other breeds.

For the commercial producer, he said use of only clean bulls is the only measure necessary.

But more preventive measures

must be taken by the seedstock producer, he said, including removal of all sires that are proven carriers by reason of having thrown defective calves, and removal from the herd of all known carrier females. Carrier females, however, could be kept in a separate herd for testing young males. Culling, as quickly as possible, depending on the merits of the animals in all other characteristics, all close relatives of the known carriers also will assist in genetic cleanup.

"All animals will be carrying some genetic junk in their makeup, only we are never sure just what it is," he explained. "So it is hardly sensible to go through the herd 'with a big stick' to throw out every animal that may remotely be carrying a specific gene or genes."

While changes are occurring in production processes of the industry, changes also are forthcoming in the packing and retailing segments, stated Dr. A. M. Mullins, head of the animal industries department of Idaho University.

Fabrication and scientific packaging, already on the scene in some areas, in certain to have influences on future production needs, and will influence markets for heavier weight cattle, he said.

### NEMA Meeting Scheduled Nov. 5

Egg producers from all parts of the Northeast will converge at the Marriott Motor Hotel at Newton, Mass., November 5 for the annual meeting of the Northeast Egg Marketing Association (NEMA).

NEMA Manager Ray Delano reports mounting pre-meeting registration interest is strong in both the business and social programs. There will be two speakers nationally known in agriculture.

Jerry Faulkner, general manager of United Egg Producers (UEP), will cover the topic, "NEMA's Role in UEP," at the business meeting which will begin at 1:30 p.m.

Sister M. Thomas More, O.S.F., of Holy Family College, Manitowoc, Wisc., will be the guest speaker at the evening banquet. She will draw upon a rich background of study and activity with many farm groups as she discusses "Cooperation or Annihilation--It's Our Choice."

Serving as master of ceremonies at the banquet will be Hendrik Wentink of Pennfield Corp., Lancaster.

An election to fill five vacancies on the NEMA board of directors is scheduled and members will hear area progress reports from directors Milton Stimpson of New York; Lionel

Grise of New England; David London of New Jersey, and Donald Horn of York County, Pa.

The officers and members of NEMA have invited all interested egg producers and members of allied industry to join in any or all of the activities November 5. The Marriott is located at the junction of Massachusetts Turnpike and Route 128.

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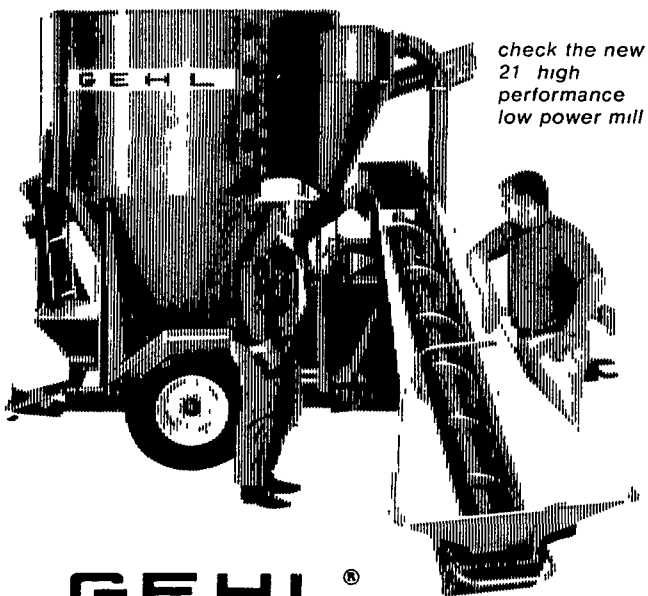
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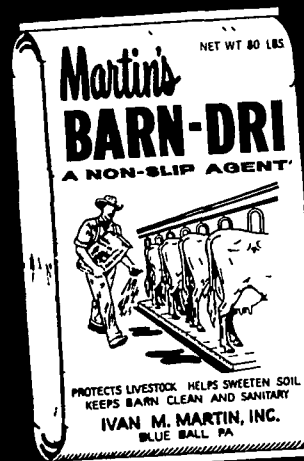
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