

# The Holloway Plan For Beef Success

by Dieter Krieg

Farm feature writer

"If you have something - take care of it, otherwise you may as well not have it." That's William C. Holloway's philosophy, and his achievements with beef cattle are evidence that he practices what he preaches. The 44-year-old Holloway manages Crebilly Farm, West Chester RD5.

Crebilly Farm, with which Bill has been associated for nearly 14 years, is a 650 acre tract of land owned by Mr. and Mrs. James K. Robinson, Jr. Most of the finished cattle from this cow-calf operation are "market toppers". Bill says that in 1972 they had the top selling load of cattle at the Lancaster Stock Yards, and they have many repeat customers. "This farm has a reputation for having good cattle," he says.

One of the first things Bill did when he started at Crebilly was to switch from Hereford cattle to Angus. He arrived at this decision because of previous experiences with both breeds. "Angus cattle are known for their resistance to pink eye, calving problems, and sunburned udders" says Bill, who was born and raised on a beef-hog farm in Harford County, Maryland, and received that state's first F.F.A. star farmer award.

Some Angus feeder steers and heifers out of Virginia became the nucleus of the

new Crebilly Farm beef herd, and Bill immediately took charge of a careful breeding program. According to Bill, some good breeding procedures to keep in mind are: "have a good registered bull around...a bull is a lot of cheap investment in the end"...artificial breeding... "a conscientious farmer can do a better job with artificial breeding than the inseminator because of proper timing"...crossbreeding, and finally "there's no money in cattle that won't reproduce." As many as 350 head of cattle are kept on the property, depending on the season.

"I'm very well pleased," says Bill of results in breeding his own cows, something he has been doing for the past two years. He cautions, however, that for the practice to be effective, the cattleman must be interested, conscientious, and prompt. While continuing to breed heifers to Angus bulls, Bill has been using Charolais bulls on older animals since 1970. "The first cross has tremendous growth", he says. Heifers from the Angus-Charolais cross are bred back to Angus because the smaller calves make for easier, almost always trouble-free calving. Bill says occasional assistance is needed with the Angus Charolais cross, but most problems can be avoided by choosing the right bull.

Most of the calves are born during the first five months of the year. January, February, and March are considered ideal months for starting calves because of advantageous marketing conditions. There's also an absence of hot weather and flies, and calves are generally thriftier, healthier and wean heavier. Calves are taken from the dams at approximately 205 days of age. Bill said average weaning weight for Angus Steers is 513 pounds while the

crossbred steers are weaned at 578 pounds. Angus heifers weigh about 443 pounds at weaning, while the crossbreds tip the scales at an average of 501 pounds.

The quality and growth factors Bill looks for in sires and dams must transmit because, as Bill puts it, "Trying to raise an inferior calf to top standards is throwing feed away."

After weaning, the calves go on pasture and receive a growing ration in self feeders. About June or July of the following year, the animals are moved to the feedlot where they are finished on a corn and barley mixture and all the free-choice hay they want. Hay, says Bill, serves to balance the animals' nutritional needs. The corn and barley mixture which Bill uses is of the home-made variety. "We do all of our own work except combining," he says. Ear corn, rather than shelled corn is used because he believes the cobs have some nutritional value, and considerable roughage value. The mixture never contains more than 50 percent corn, although it can vary greatly, depending upon the buying and selling alternatives he may wish to consider in his feed costs calculations. In addition to



William C. Holloway, manager of West Chester's Crebilly Farms, is one of the area's premier beef breeders.

its feed value, Bill likes barley for its ability to take up moisture, keep the corn from heating, and prevent spoilage in the feeders.

Minerals and salt are provided to the cattle free-choice. Bill has never seen any advantage in the use of such growth stimulants as stilbesterol, and does not use them. His major reason for not using growth hormones and related products is because they require certain withdrawal periods. Without them he can take immediate advantage of optimum market conditions.

The cows at Crebilly Farm receive only pasture in the summer, and the poorer quality hay in the winter. Silage is not used at all in the

feeding program because it tends to get the cows too fat, which in turn leads to breeding and calving complications. The beef animal is capable of utilizing a lot of roughage, says Bill.

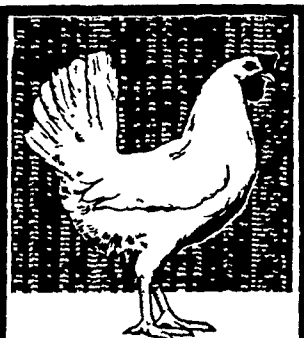
Careful attention must always be paid to the animals who have freshened and are nursing calves. Normally, says Bill, a beef animal does not produce enough milk to get mastitis, but it can happen if a calf frequently fails to suck on a certain quarter. Negligence is nearly always the reason behind mastitis. He has not

had a single case in the 14 years he has been there.

Milk production is an important factor to consider when selecting breed cows because the calves must attain their desirable weaning weights while nursing the dam. A normal lactation for a beef cow is about seven months; however Bill pointed out that a cow will usually dry herself up even if the calf dies at birth.

There aren't many health problems in the Crebilly herd. Annual TB and

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