

Free eartags issued by state

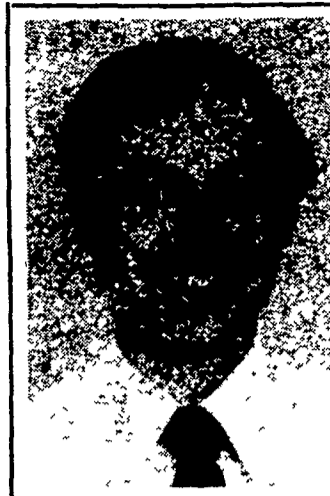
HARRISBURG -- Pennsylvania's Secretary of Agriculture Kent D. Shelhamer has announced that the department's Bureau of Animal Industry is currently providing free of charge ear tags for cattle identification. The ear tags are prenumbered in conformance with national standards. The official Pennsylvania ear tag," Shelhamer said,

"is available to our practicing veterinarians, and will provide a standard permanent identification which will be invaluable in the issuance of health certificates and identification of tested cattle." The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture is supporting the new identification program sponsored by the Pennsylvania Holstein Association for

grade Holstein cattle, Shelhamer explained. "Our cattle ear tag is available to any Pennsylvania farmer who wishes to have his calves tagged for this program."

Shelhamer said that many female calves in Pennsylvania are vaccinated for brucellosis between the ages of two and six months. "Now the veterinarian can tag grade calves at that time, so application for grade registry can be completed within the required time limit. Other calves can be tagged by the farmer or veterinarian for identification purposes only."

Shelhamer noted that the ear tag also provides another service to the farmers of the Commonwealth, as a method to trace infected cattle found through the department's disease surveillance programs. "Traceback information is very important in our disease programs, and particularly tuberculosis and brucellosis," Shelhamer said. "As the disease incidence continues to decrease, we cannot afford to neglect identification for the potential threat of exposure to disease that still exists."



Facts for dairymen

Assoc. County Agent Lancaster, Pa.

AI sire is sold for about \$8 per service. Such sires usually have a Predicted Difference (PD) for milk of 500 pounds. Several studies show that you can afford to pay about one dollar per 100 pound increase in PD milk above the base figure. Therefore, a plus 1000 PD milk bull is still a good value at up to \$13 per unit while a plus 1500 PD milk bull would be a good investment at up to \$18 per unit. With all this information it's really too bad that Larry missed the shoofly pie with ice cream!

xxx


"Slippery free stalls are not a good place to observe cows in heat" was just one of the many straight forward management hints that Dr. Robert Gutzwiller threw out at the second of our breeding meetings held several weeks ago. Sounds simple enough, but how many of you dairymen with free stall barns are willing to do something about the poor footing in the barn!

Daily scraping of the concrete alleys will eventually make them smooth - no matter how rough you had them to start with. Matt Young from Red Nob Farm at Wakefield, has told me several times that this was one of their concerns when they were designing their new barn. By going to a flush manure handling system the problem of smooth floors was taken care of. Obviously not all dairymen can solve the problem this way, but there is a reasonable solution.

Rubber cutting edges for scraping blades are available. This rubber edge fits between your present steel edge and the backing plate. From what I hear, this cutting edge will scrape clean, but will not smooth the alley concrete. It also lasts longer and costs less than a steel blade. Dairymen who are using them really like them - to me that's the most important measure of their worth. Check with your equipment dealer - your cows will appreciate your efforts and the number of "missed" or "silent" heats may be reduced.

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STOCK BULLS



While John Blyholder of the Pennsylvania Guernsey Association and I were overeating at a luncheon banquet several weeks ago, the discussion came around to what it cost to raise a replacement animal. John had overheard a county agent from central Pennsylvania using figures in excess of \$700 per replacement. While Don Ace took a third helping of dried corn, he observed that the normal figure used was closer to \$550 per animal but costs are rising. Since Roger Emig from Atlantic Breeders Coop was with us someone quickly brought up the rising cost of semen as a reason for the high cost of heifers. Up to this point Roger had been concentrating more on his pork and sauerkraut than the cost of heifers, but he quickly joined the discussion pointing out that it takes six units of semen for every

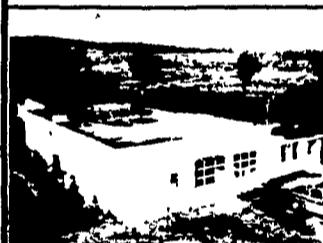
replacement female that enters the milking string.

Well, our discussion was never completed because the program started, but I did have a chance a few days later to talk with Larry Specht, our Extension dairy specialist who works with dairy breeding. He had some interesting thoughts about sire selection and semen costs.

Larry says that it's easy to be convinced that semen from highly advertised sires is worth \$40-\$50 or even \$60 per unit - but look at the cost! He agrees that it takes six units per replacement and at \$10 per unit you have \$60 invested in each heifer from breeding costs alone. If the semen cost \$50 per unit you have a \$300 investment. Unless the second heifer can be sold for \$240 more than the first one, you are paying too much for the higher priced semen.

Semen from the average

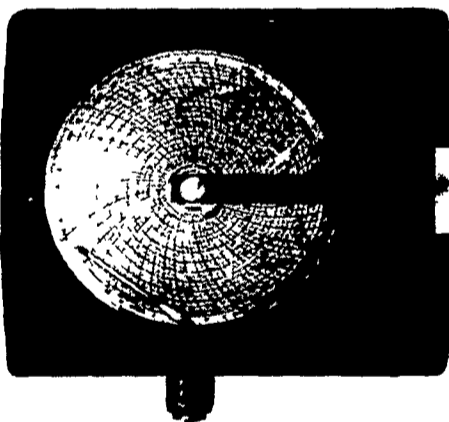
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