

Nominations sought for transportation group

NEW YORK, N.Y. - Secretary of Agriculture Bob Bergland and Secretary of Transportation Brock Adams are seeking nominations by December 15 for a task force to study the nation's agricultural transportation needs.

The task force, which will be headed by the two secretaries, will have 14 appointed members, drawn from the public and private sectors.

Under the Rural Transportation Advisory Task Force Act signed into law Nov. 2, Bergland and Adams will appoint the 14 members from nominations submitted by carriers, Congress, government agencies, and the agricultural and academic communities.

The task force will study and report on methods for moving agricultural commodities - including forest products and farm supplies - more economically and efficiently. The group also

will explore ways to determine continuing transportation needs and identify such future impediments as rail car shortages and rail line abandonments. Another goal will be to recommend a national agricultural transportation policy.

Before making its report to Congress, the task force will hold public hearings on its initial findings and recommendations. The final report will include specific recommendations for a rail system adequate to meet agricultural needs.

Nominations should be submitted to: Ronald F. Schrader, Special Assistant Transportation, Office of the Secretary, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250; Attention: Rural Transportation Task Force. Nominations should include which category the nominee represents - carrier, agriculture or academic community - and the nominee's qualifications.



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Type judging can help in selecting a cow

NEWARK, Del. - Choosing a cow to buy or breed shouldn't be a matter of guesswork or mere "animal instinct," says Delaware Extension dairy specialist Dr. George F.W. Haenlein. Savvy dairymen are improving their herds and saving money by relying on a management technique known as type judging. They choose cattle the scientific way - or at least the trained way.

Haenlein explains that dairy experts know what characteristics to look for in dairy cattle, and individual cows can be rated accordingly. A cow with the right stature and breed

characteristics, the right body capacity, good dairy character, and a good mammary system should turn out to be a good milk producer - and statistics consistently bear this out.

It takes a great deal of training and experience to be able to type judge cattle, but many farmers begin to pick up the skill as youngsters in 4-H and F.F.A. programs. Some stay with the field throughout life, becoming professional classifiers for the cattle breed associations. In that capacity they visit farms on a rotational basis and classify every mature animal within their breed.

This helps farmers see how their cows stack up against the ideal, and it also helps them select the best animals for breeding, thereby improving the breed further in each successive generation.

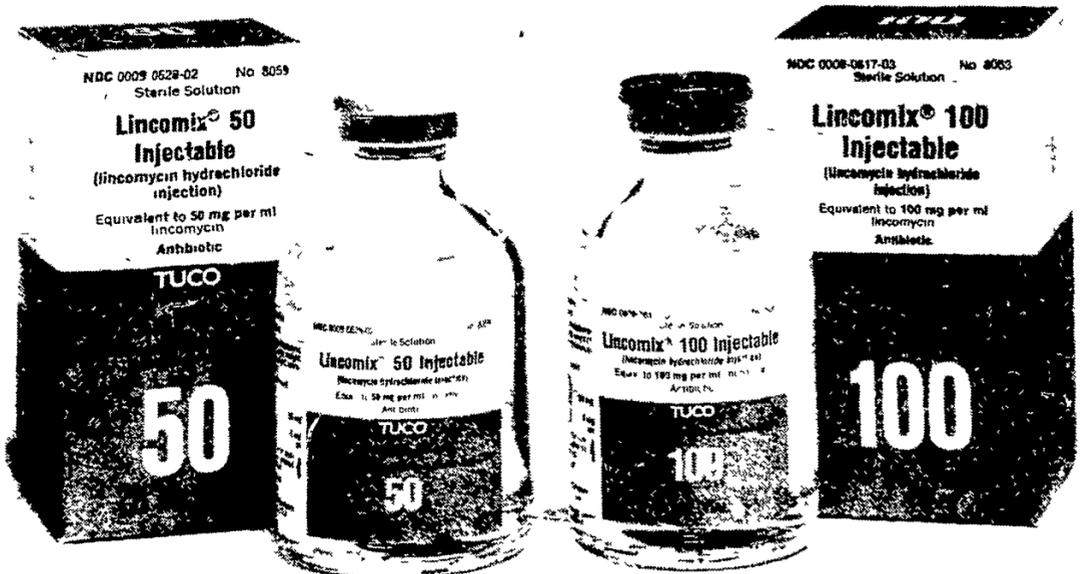
Even though the professional classifiers skip the calves in their evaluations, dairy farmers themselves have much to gain by evaluating calves against the same criteria. Three out of the four criteria for evaluating an adult cow are already present in the calf, everything but the mammary system. Furthermore, type judging is almost as good a production predictor as records, but a

calf can be type scored when records are not available. A manager can evaluate a calf's stature and breed characteristics, its body capacity and its dairy character three years before the animal produces a drop of milk. This information could save the manager considerable cost if it prevents feeding and caring for an animal that finally proves useless after a three year wait.

Dairy farmers who wish to have their cows judged and entered into the national computer records should contact Dr. Haenlein at Agricultural Hall at the University of Delaware.

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