

Cattle breeding trends eyed at ABS session

Lancaster Farming, Saturday, June 28, 1980—A27

LANCASTER — Trends in cattle breeding were discussed by Dr. Paul D. Miller, Director of Sire Development for American Breeders Service, at a District Annual Banquet at

the Landis Valley Motor Inn Tuesday night. Among the topics touched on by Dr. Miller were future semen production involving bulls on allocation, customer expectations concerning



Among service reps honored at annual district banquet of American Breeders Service Tuesday night were, from the left, Ira L. Boyer, Thomasville, York County, five years of service; C. Robert Greider, Bernville, Berks County, five years of service; Darvin Yoder, Ephrata, Lancaster County, top representative for 1979; Maurice C. Stump,

West Grove, Chester County, 20 years of service and surpassing the 125,000 total unit volume with 133,711 units; and James N. Charles, Columbia, Lancaster County; surpassing the 50,000-unit level with 51,223 total unit volume. Yoder and his wife, Joan, will receive a trip to the ABS Americana Oct. 1-3.

genetic improvement, the future of colored breeds in AI, expansion of young bull testing, and long-range effects of the narrowing of the genetic base.

In addition, Dr. Miller told his audience of service reps primarily from southeastern Pennsylvania that he is seeing yet another increasing trend — the

growing incidence of milking three times a day.

"Milking three times a day is resulting in about a 20 percent production increase in herds," he said.

"I recently visited one herd in which there were eight two-year-olds producing more than 140 pounds a day each in their first lactation."

Dr. Miller explained that the increasing use of embryo transplants has stepped up concentration on the very best bulls whose semen has been on allocation. But he expects the supply situation to improve in the near future. He described semen production recently involving allocated bulls as phenomenal. In some instances production has doubled over the previous six months.

Due to the rapid changes in genetic development, he said dairy farmers are now coming to expect annual production increases of 75 pounds a year.

He went on to explain that most of the construction taking place at AI facilities presently centers on new barns for young bulls being sampled in the sire program. ABS is sampling 130 young bulls this year, which is about 25 more than last year and that number will likely increase next year, Dr. Miller said.

The future of the colored breeds appears mixed. While industry-wide sampling is dropping, probably half of what it was five years ago, ABS sales in the colored lines are increasing at a rate faster than with the Holstein

breed. Dr. Miller said ABS will continue its sampling program with the colored breeds.

To realize just how much the genetic base may be narrowing, only a glance at the Sire Directory is necessary. Just count the number of bulls not sired by Elevation, Bootmaker, Chief or Astronaut, Dr. Miller said. It comes out to about 32.

Dr. Miller said he participated in a Dairy Science Symposium on the question of how embryo transplants would further affect the narrowing of the genetic base. A population geneticist was asked to computer simulate a comparison between a broader genetic base versus narrower blood lines in breeding for specific purposes.

The group concluded that there appears to be very little to worry about concerning long-range genetic effects.

He explained that ABS sampling last year of young bulls involved 36 different sires, providing a broad genetic base. But it was still the individual dairyman who makes the decision of which bull is selected, he added.—DA

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