

# Red & Whites are latest in dairy breeds

BY SHEILA MILLER

ELIZABETHTOWN—For the last issue in this year's Dairy Month, it is only fitting that *Lancaster Farming* takes a look at the last "breed" of dairy cattle recognized by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. We're talking about the Red & Whites.

According to John Carpenter, of the Red & White Dairy Cattle Association, Crystal Spring, there have always been red and white cattle in the Holstein breed. In the countries where the breed originated, he pointed out, there was no discrimination between the black and white or the red and white cattle.

However, when the Holsteins were imported into the U.S., black and white cattle were required in order to be registered with the Holstein Friesian Association. Since black is dominant over red, some animals that looked black in color, but that carried the red trait, were imported over the years.

Carpenter pointed out there is no difference between Red & White dairy cattle and the black and white Holsteins, except their color. But, he added, from 1885 to the 1960's, they weren't recognized or registered in any herd book.

"The red calves were of no value to the farmers. Good cattle that carried the red recessive trait and produced red calves were considered undesirable, like they carried the trait of mule foot. Many outstanding pedigreed calves were disposed of — and the farmer made sure that no one knew about the red calf," he said.

Realizing the waste of productive cattle just because of color, the American Red & White Dairy Cattle Society was incorporated on February, 1964, Carpenter said. In 1966, they changed their name to Red & White Dairy Cattle Association.

The association was spearheaded by a group of Milking Shorthorn breeders. Discouraged with their breed, these people saw the Red & Whites as the best way to improve their production. This resulted in cross breeding the two, Carpenter explained.

He said that the Milking Shorthorn Society handled the registration of the Red & Whites at first. But, as more

red Holstein blood was infused into the Milking Shorthorn breed and purebred Red & Whites were produced, disagreements arose which eventually brought about the split between the associations.

Since its shaky beginnings, RWDCA has grown. Today, it boasts about 800 members across the U.S. and Canada. Last September, there were 68 Pennsylvania members on the association's books.

"Our registration and membership has increased between 10-20 percent," said Carpenter.

One reason for their growth is that RWDCA accepts grade herds into their program. "As long as it's dairy, we have a completely open herd book — even colored breeds can be entered," said Carpenter.

Of the 3905 cattle registered, Carpenter noted 46 percent are black and white (grade and double registered) and 8 percent are mixed or colored (anything that's not Holstein).

A lot of the cattle registered with RWDCA are also registered under Bridleborough, Carpenter said.

He pointed out that many people said they felt by opening their herd books to other breeds, RWDCA wouldn't get the right kind of cattle.

Disputing this theory, Carpenter said RWDCA requires the normal sketches and sire identification, just as the other breed register does. "Besides, most people who go to the trouble of registering their cattle and spending their money invest it in good cows."

Carpenter explained that when the breed association started in 1964, all the bloodlines of the cattle were identified and recorded with certificates. Now, as more breeders are getting involved in Red & Whites, different bloodlines are being introduced into a breed history that stems from a few sires.

He said 95 percent of the Red & White's genetic base can be attributed to one tremendous sire, ABC Reflection Sovereign. This bull, he said, died many years ago, but his popularity and reputation as a sire lived on.

Carpenter recalled that the last ampule of semen from this bull was auctioned



C Blue Haven Rose Ned is an excellent Red & White cow with a 305 day lactation record of 23,510 pounds milk and 1011 pounds fat. She was the first place 4-year-old Cow in Milk and Grand

Champion at the 1978 International Red & White Show, and was the first place Aged Cow in Milk and the Reserve Grand Champion last year.

off for \$30,000 — and the glass ampule was cracked. Comparing that to today's popular bull, he said Ivanhoe's semen is selling for between \$5000 and \$6000.

With a predicted total of roughly 5000 registered cattle for this year, Carpenter enthusiastically said, "There's been a complete turn-around in dairy producers' attitudes toward Red & Whites, with roughly a 400 percent increase in registered animals."

"Now, a bull carrying red is more popular, and Red & Whites are worth two times as much as the black and white Holsteins in the export markets."

One Lancaster County farmer that agrees with Carpenter is Kenneth D. Myer, R5 Elizabethtown.

Out of a milking herd of 70 cows at Myerose Red & Whites, there are only two that aren't registered with RWDCA. Myer said he has "90 percent more Red & Whites than anybody on this side of the Mississippi."

In the Red & White business about 10 years. Myer told *Lancaster Farming* he chose the breed because his dad didn't want black and white Holsteins.

Myer explained that when

he worked for his dad, he saw the need to get more milk production than what he was getting with the Guernsey herd, even though he recognized Guernsey milk to have the best quality and butterfat.

Over the next several

years, the graduate of Elizabethtown High School and former FFA'er built up his Red & White herd

"I bought one or two cows and bought some calves. I advertised in the Pennsylvania Holstein News for years, and attended sales

and visited farms in Canada. It was a slow change from Guernsey."

In 1979, Myer bought the 130 acre farm from his dad, along with the cattle. He built a new barn, equipped

(Turn to Page B15)



The Red & Whites in Kenneth Myer's new barn leisurely eat their silage. Tiles serve as the cows' dinner plates. "Concrete will deteriorate, where tile stays smooth and is easy to clean" said Myer.



Standing next to 5-year-old Petunia, Myer says her predicted production is 22,000 pounds milk and a little over 1000 pounds fat. She is a daughter of Argo Acres Marquis Ned, a Canadian bull.



The highest pedigree index young Red & White sire is Sleepy-Hollow Mag Chief, sired by C Romandale Shalimar Magnet and out of a very good Arlinda Chief dam