

Rustlers

(Continued from Page B4)

Sentencing would be delayed until those costs were paid.

Meanwhile, Donald Baker had become a one-man crusade for photographs on cattle registry papers.

"The state's attorney told me that one little discrepancy — one misplaced curve or angle — one little spot missing — on a sketched paper might be cause to throw out the registry certificate as legal evidence, he says.

"Only an identical picture, a photograph, may be considered solid proof on 'spotted' cattle, like Ayrshires, Holsteins, or Guernseys.

In Maryland, most registered cattle would not have an eartag, which can be removed anyway. We may have to ultimately rely on tattoos, like the Brown Swiss and Jersey breeds."

In July, Judge Donald J. Gilmore pronounced a three-

year suspended sentence and five years probation for Ambrose, and ordered him to obtain treatment in a mental health program.

Attorney H.L. Huhl had cited Ambrose' history of mental problems and his having been enrolled in programs in the Spring Grove State Hospital, the Walter P. Carter Medical Center and a clinic in Catoxville, MD.

An account of the sentencing carried in the "Carroll County Evening Sun" noted Judge Gilmore as saying "The court recognizes that the defendant has serious problems that need constant medical supervision."

Maximum penalty for rustling in Maryland is 15 years in jail, a \$1000 fine or both.

Cattle rustling, which had been taking place frequently in the southern York County and northern Maryland area, has since quieted, although the crime had

made an upswing in other parts of the state.

Like other farmers in the area who had been cattle loss victims, Baker and his family carry lasting emotional scars of the intrusion onto their private property.

They recall a night earlier this past summer, when at 2:30 a.m., the dairy cattle were heard mulling around and lowing. Earlier that night, an unfamiliar pickup had traveled back and forth on the two roads that bisect at the edge of Baker's meadow pasture.

"I grabbed my shotgun," Baker admits. As he stood checking it outside the house in the light, the strange pickup again, traveling at great speed toward Pennsylvania, passed the house and has not been back in the area.

All that was found up at the dairy barn was a new calf, with the cows moving around to observe the calf. But still, the family and neighbors wonder if they disturbed a potential troublemaker.

A wariness has settled over the quiet neighborhood and the residents keep an eye out for each other. Recently a Pennsylvania neighbor up the road called the Bakers, when a large truck was observed creeping down the narrow road toward the farm.

It was a feed truck making a late delivery, but Baker rests easier knowing that everyone remains alert and concerned.

And, every chance they have, the Baker family continues to campaign for pictures on cattle registry certificates. Suppose, they wonder, if the stolen animals had carried sketched registry, and a question of ownership had arisen, would Patches and Betsy been returned?

Representatives of the three "spotted" dairy cattle breeds say they've never had any refusal to their knowledge of sketched registry certificates being accepted as positive identification.

Dale Severy, assistant to the manager of the Ayrshire Breeders Association at Brandon, Vermont, indicated that an Ayrshire can be identified in several ways. Tattooing is one approved method, following requirements set by the Association Board. Or breeders can submit a sketched application, or photographs, which will be fastened to the final certificate.

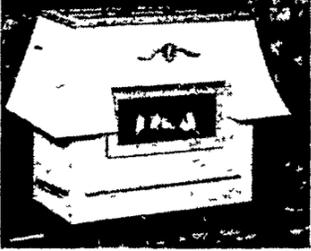
However the Ayrshire Association is presently converting to computerization and will then encourage tattooing. The Canadian breed organization already requires mandatory tattoos.

A spokesman for the registry department of the Holstein Association at Brattleboro, Vermont, indicated that, while tattooing has been discussed already, it is not likely to become mandatory. The Holstein Association does prefer that each registry application come with an eartag number.

Holstein registration can also be either a sketch or photograph form, black and white, and no questioning or sketched registries has ever been made in legal proceedings.

Although Guernsey breeders may submit photographs in lieu of sketches, they will be used only for an office staffer to draw the registry sketch, according to Irvin Nichols, registry director for the American Guernsey Cattle Club at Petersburg, New Hampshire. Tattooing is also optional, if breeders prefer to use that method of identification.

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