

Cow-family records can increase index accuracy

BY DONNA TOMMELLEO
LANCASTER — The use of additional cow-family records for Cow Indexes increases the accuracy of the index but breeders still must rely on the sire's side to provide most of the influence.

Before January 1981, a CI (estimation of a cow's transmitting ability) was calculated on the basis of a cow's own records plus her sire's Predicted Difference. The new method now includes record's on the cow's dam, daughters and maternal half-sisters.

Recent USDA studies from Beltsville, Md., analyzed about 800,000 Holsteins and indicated an eight percent increase in accuracy in son performance predictions and a slight increase in daughter performance predictions when the cow and daughter were in different herds.

The additional records will also aid in estimating the transmitting ability of first-lactation heifers because adding the dam's CI would be similar to two records on the heifer, herself.

However, predictions at the end of a pencil point sometimes do not pan out in real life.

"Statistics are based on mass data averages, and there is no

given herd that is average," says Donald Seipt, Pennsylvania's National Director for the National Holstein Association.

"Breeders are constantly living and working with cattle that are the extremes," he observes, adding that the end result is sometimes the exception rather than the prediction:

Seipt supports the research but admits improvements do take time and looks for a refinement of data that will further increase prediction accuracy.

For some breeders, the old index may not have been a fair measurement of their cattle's transmitting ability.

"I'm really glad to see the change. Too often good cows were being neglected," says Guernsey breeder Ginger Myers.

At their Littlestown farm, Green Manor Guernseys, she and husband John own a high-producer that consistently classifies Excellent but is out of a low PD bull. Because of the sire's influence and

lack of maternal information, Myers says she feels that cow would never have had a high CI under the old method. However, she emphasizes CIs are not the sole criteria in a breeding program.

"Breeders utilize CIs when they can," she concludes, "but they're not the catch-all for mating cows."

First-time contestant wins Auctioneer title

ST. PAUL, Minn. — This year was the first, and the last, time Doug Jagers will enter the World Livestock Auctioneer Championship—because on June 12, he took the World Title, besting a record-breaking number of entrants.

Jagers, 30, with his father, Bob Jagers, owns Sheridan Livestock Commission Company in Rushville, Nebraska, was clearly surprised by his victory.

"Has anyone ever passed out at one of these (award ceremonies)?" he asked as he received his trophy.

The Championship, in its eighteenth year, is sponsored annually by Livestock Marketing Association, Kansas City, Mo., and

conducted by an allied company, Livestock Market Digest, Inc., Kansas City, to focus on the professionalism of the auctioneer in livestock marketing.

This year's contest was held at Saint Paul Union Stockyards, St. Paul, Minn., the world's largest livestock market, and attracted 101 contestants, the highest number of entrants in the contest's history.

The world reserve champion is Bud Knight, Sturgis, S.D. In last year's competition he placed as central region champion. Knight was sponsored by Sturgis Livestock Exchange, Sturgis, S.D.

The world runner-up champion title was shared this year by James Carrithers, Johnson, Kan.,

and Keith Saathoff, Creighton, Nebr. Carrithers was sponsored by Syracuse Sales Co., Inc., Syracuse, Kan., and Saathoff by Creighton Livestock Market, Creighton, Nbr.

In addition to the world titles, these regional winners were also announced at a dinner and dance following the contest that evening:

WESTERN REGION

Champion, Dick Hess, Ft. Collins, Colo.; reserve champion, Bruce Cormian, Burlington, Colo.; runner-up champion, Jeff Stokes, Port Orchard, Wash.

CENTRAL REGION

Champion, Alan Odden, Flandreau, S.D.; reserve champion, Armon H. Wolff, Golden Valley, N.D.; runner-up champion, Paul

C. Behr, So. St. Paul, Minn.

EASTERN REGION

Champion, Dan Williams, Boone, N.C.; reserve champion, Steve Relander, Aledo, Ill.; runner-up champion, a tie between Robert L. Blackford, Adairville, Ken.

The winners received trophies and merchandise prizes. Jagers was the recipient of the World Champion Ring, valued at over \$1,000.

Contestants are judged by a panel of livestock market owners on the criteria they look for when hiring an auctioneer. Approximately 1,500 attended the six-hour contest.

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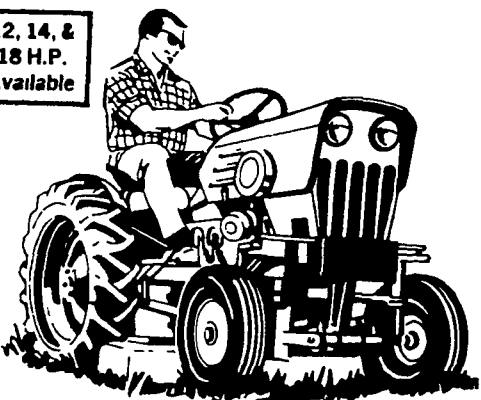
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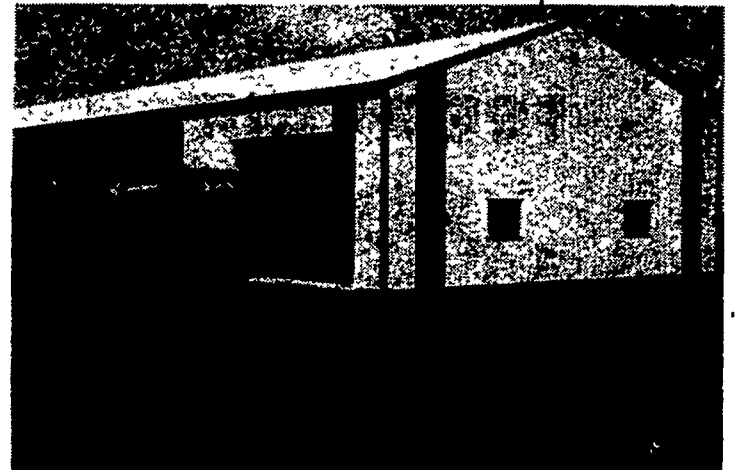
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