

Kid's Korner

Do you know about the Holstein cow?

Holsteins have contributed to the good life of American farm families for more than 100 years. Their ability to profitably produce high quality, nutritious milk under all climates and a variety of management systems has made them the most popular dairy breed in America.

Today the Holstein dairy breed accounts for nearly 90% of all dairy cattle in the United States.

Holsteins are number one both in milk production and in income over feed costs. U.S. Holsteins offer the world's dairymen an opportunity to reach the same level of total production with fewer cows and less energy.

But how did this all come about?

The Holstein cow originated in Europe. Her parents were the black cows and the white cows of the Batavians and the Friesians, two migrant European tribes, who moved together into the fertile Rhine Delta region about 2,000 years ago.

That Rhineland region became the Netherlands and for many years the Holstein cow was bred through a process of ruthless culling to obtain those animals which would make the very best use of the area's most abundant resource, grass.

Much later, after the New World was settled and markets began to develop for milk in America, forward-looking American breeders turned to Holland for their seed-stock.

Winthrop Chenery, a Massachusetts breeder, purchased a Holland cow from a master of a Dutch sailing vessel who had landed a cargo at the Boston port. The cow had furnished the crew with fresh milk during the voyage. She proved to be such a satisfactory producer that Chenery made later importations in 1857, 1859 and 1861. Many breeders soon joined the race to establish the Holstein upon these shores.

But, after approximately 8,000 animals had been imported, cattle disease broke out in Europe. Imports ceased. No longer were seed-stock animals available from the old country.

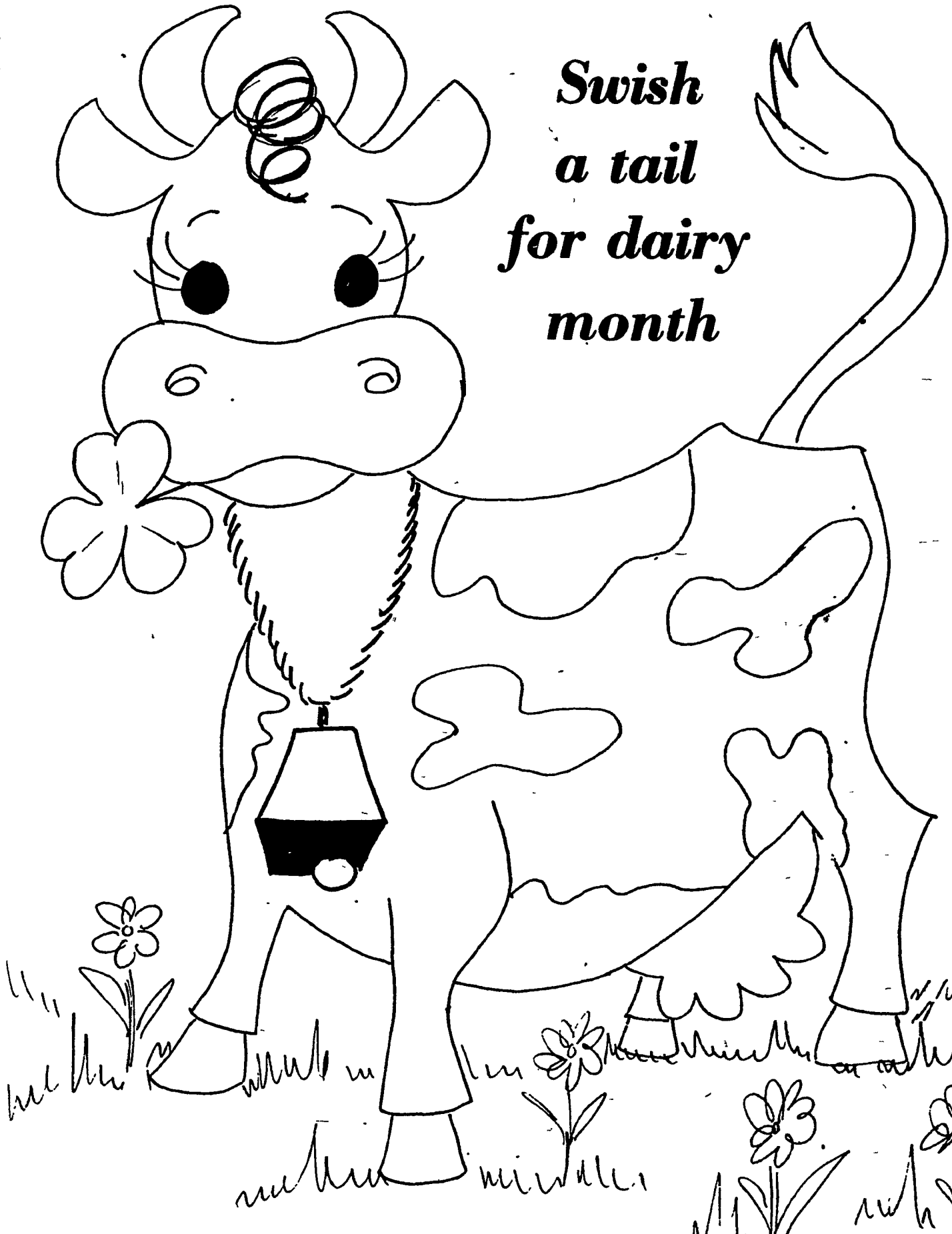
And so, the American breeders gathered together formed their associations, merged them in 1885 into the Holstein-Friesian Association of America, and with their own Herd Book and their own foundation stock, they set about the tremendous task of building their own Holstein breed.

Today's Holstein cow is a large animal, with outstanding milk producing capability and distinctive color markings of black and white or red and white.

A healthy, newborn Holstein calf will weigh 90 pounds, or more, at birth. A mature cow, in milk, should weigh about 1,500 pounds and stands 58 inches at the withers.

The breed is horned, but horns are rarely seen on the animals because they are removed or prevented from growing by dairymen for the sake of safety and good management.

For the first several months of life, both sexes of dairy cattle are commonly called calves. As the calves grow older, farmers refer to the females as "heifers" and call



*Swish
a tail
for dairy
month*

Bessie the cow waves goodbye with her tail to Dairy Month as it draws to a close. But keep using those delicious dairy products throughout the year; the drinks previously featured

in Kid's Korner are especially good as summer coolers and after school snacks for this fall.

the males "bulls". The females become "cows" when they begin lactating.

Heifers can be bred at 15 months of age and approximately 800 pounds. Holstein females come into heat approximately every 21 days and should have their first offspring between 24 and 27 months of age. The gestation period for Holsteins is approximately nine months. For maximum milk production, cows should be bred to have a calf every year.

While some cows may live as

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Grubby

