

## Chester PFA reviews gas leases, mushroom imports



### The Dairy Business By Newton Bair

#### PRODUCE OR REPRODUCE?

Let's just say it's the nature of the beast! In order to produce (milk, that is) a cow must reproduce (calves of course). Actually, reproduction comes first, with milk as a by-product. August is a good time to take a look at the number one priority in the dairy business, since it begins the season of establishing a "Base" for next years pricing system.

Just getting cows bred can be of some concern, let alone the hassle or pleasure of selecting the correct mates, but that's a subject for another time. Getting them safe with calf on time is our prime object now, because timing can have a profound influence on next years profits. Your profits will be affected by the time of freshening as well as the interval between calving dates.

How much does calving interval actually influence profits? Each year at our workshops for DHIA members, we go through an exercise to determine the potential loss of income when the herd calving interval exceeds 12 months. It's when the interval

stretches beyond the unlucky number (13) that real losses can mount up. And these losses don't show up on the DHIA report—they must be computed from some of your own local data.

The benchmark in figuring breeding efficiency is call "days open" — the number of which a cow is not pregnant. If the average "days open" exceeds 90 for the herd, the calving interval shoots beyond the year and things will never be the same again. In addition to fouling up your production base, there will be losses of actual production, as well as added costs for Artificial Insemination (AI), Veterinary fees, calf losses, replacement losses and excess culls.

Just how great are these losses? Using the formula developed by Dexter Putnam, Penn State Dairy Specialist, for the annual DHIA workshops, here are some quick eye-openers.

For example, a 100 cow herd with a 13 month calving interval (120 days open) requiring 2.1 (AI) services per conception will accumulate a production loss of over

WEST CHESTER — "Pennsylvania Farmer's Association has requested the current tariff on mushroom imports be continued to allow the mushroom industry to adjust to increasing imports", reported Harold Kulp, president of

500 lb. of milk per cow. With a profit above feed cost of \$6 a hundred lbs., or \$30 per cow — \$3,000 for the herd. Add to this loss these figures:

Added AI cost per day open — .15; Added Veterinary cost per day open — .15; Calf loss per cow per day — (assuming a calf value of \$125) — .32; Adding cost of replacements per cow per day — (if replacements cost \$1,600 and culls are worth \$500) — .91.

To added losses per cow, per day open, amount to \$5,156. Plus the above milk loss, the total is a staggering \$8,156 per year!

Some of this is of course theoretical, but the exercise points up some often overlooked aspects of what happens to income when you run into breeding problems on a herd basis.

In discussing the economics of reproduction, I haven't attempted to tell how to avoid the problem. Suffice it to say that you now have your hand on your pocketbook and are fully aware that reproduction is the first step in production. As Drew Lewis says, "If the income is less than the outgo, the upshot can be your downfall."

The formula used in the above calculations are available from the Penn State DHIA. I've programmed them for the Apple II, which increases their usefulness tremendously.

the Chester County Farmer's Association during the Board of Directors' monthly meeting held last week at Highland Orchards. The reported testimony was presented at a hearing held by the International Trade Commission in Washington on July 30, 1981.

Chester County PFA members also heard from fellow member Richard Steele who reported on a recent energy meeting held in Carlisle. Both he and Norman Aamodt attended the session.

"If drilling for gas in a new field in West Virginia is productive, expect to see buyers of gas/oil leases in Chester County," Steele told the group. He explained the geologic formation extends from West Virginia through this county. If gas/oil is found in West Virginia, it is likely that similar pockets could be found here.

Steele advised farmers to form energy groups and to supervise the writing of new leases. Groups of farmers would have more power in negotiating favorable terms with lease purchasers. Steele recommended any farmer contacted by a gas/oil lease buyer, should contact any Farmers' Association director to secure information and guidance for protection.

Ed Taczanowsky, regional field director for PFA suggested "farmers should not accept, nor should they cash any checks for leases without first renegotiating the lease. Only sign a one year lease and be sure that it includes a clause that it will be renegotiated each succeeding year."

Steele advised farmers to make sure the lease contains provisions for disposal of discarded equipment, for roads to be put where farmers want them, for handling

waste water, for the royalty to be paid even though the well is a producer and is then capped.

"Be sure that everything is covered in writing in the lease," Steele cautioned.

Kulp announced that the regional legislative up-date meeting will be held on August 27, at 7 p.m. at Denver, Pa. He asked members of the legislative committee to attend. He also said that District 3 (which includes Chester County) will be electing a new director at the State Annual Meeting. Nominations for a candidate from this County should be submitted to Harold Kulp within the next two weeks.

Policy Development meetings will be held: September 8 at David Hodge's, Marshallton; September 10 at Robert Mast's, Christiana; Richard Breckbill's residence, Oxford and Arthur Yocom's, Elverson; and Harold Kulp's on September 24. All Farmer's Association members are urged to attend one of these meetings to express their opinions on Farmer's Association policy.

County policy positions will be voted on by all county members at the fall banquet to be held on October 1 at the Brandywine Club in Chadds Ford. Chairmen of that event are David Hodge and Al Bartels.

Farm-city weekend is scheduled for November 21-22. Byron Hawthorne, chairman for the event, asked that farmers who would make their farms available for city visitors on those dates to contact him at 215/383-5494. He stressed the importance of having farms named early so that brochures could be printed up.

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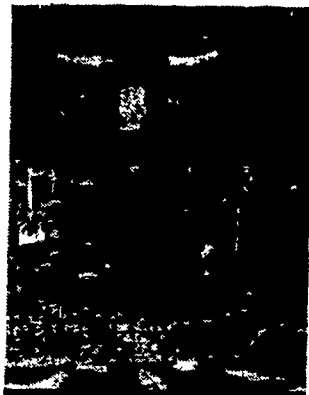
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