

NDHIA director promotes quality program

BY DONNA TOMMELLEO
UNIVERSITY PARK — States not meeting minimum standards specified in a proposed quality program by the National DHIA could lose their official DHIA record status, said National DHIA director of field service George Gramling.

The Quality Certification Program, still in its rough draft stages, was developed internally to upgrade DHIA programs on a national basis, he explained.

"Everybody realized we have to have something with some teeth in it," said Gramling.

And what a set of choppers! Unofficial records cannot be used for USDA sire summaries or cow index. Purebred breeders would be at a loss to merchandise cattle without official records.

But the program is not scheduled to go into effect until late 1984, Gramling reassured. Meanwhile, the national director has been on the road a great deal to bring the proposal to the local level and field expected suggestions, questions and criticisms.

The program will attempt to provide a uniform set of standards that all 46 states, which currently have DHIA programs, will follow. However, Gramling admitted that evaluation procedures have yet to be finalized.

Gramling explained that variation regarding certain DHIA practices can vary from state to state and county to county. For example, the NDHIA recommends that milk meters be tested at least once a year.

"There are many cases where this has not been done," said Gramling.

Meter testing and length of time between tests are the only two requirements on the entire program. The remaining set of standards, Gramling noted, are listed as recommendations.

The national Q.C.P. calls for testing meters not less than once a year. Pennsylvania DHIA recommends that all supervisors with more than 25 herds per month check meters every six months. In addition, any new meter in Pennsylvania must be checked before first use.

The second Q.C.P. requirement states that no more than two percent of all test intervals exceed 45 days.

The remaining recommendations, Gramling noted, will be divided into three categories — field services, milk testing laboratories and dairy record processing centers.

If Q.C.P. is approved, a supervisor could very well end up back in school. In addition to on-the-farm training, the Q.C.P. recommends a new tester attends a beginner's class as well as an annual conference.

Gramling explained that an annual job performance exam also is being considered. Supervisors would be evaluated on meter care, sample handling, rule enforcement, percent error and turn around time.

The Q.C.P. suggests that each state supply its membership with the DHIA rules. Gramling stated that infraction of by-laws will be properly enforced. Although he admitted the NDHIA will have more enforcement authority, Gramling said the national association will concentrate more on promoting the program through education.

Under the Q.C.P., members will have to provide visible iden-

tification on all cows tested. Gramling noted that state's should strive for no less than 11.25 tests per herd per year, as an average. He explained the more often a herd is tested the more useful the information becomes in herd management.

The Q.C.P. also suggests that states offer all official National Cooperative DHIA programs.

In order to qualify for certification, states must meet a minimum set of standards. If below that minimum, said Gramling, the state will be offered a grace period of at least a year. At the end of the grace period, if a state still turns in a below minimum score, it will operate in a "non-certified category."

"That state will be unofficial," said the national field director.

Although nothing has been finalized, Gramling remarked that at the next meeting of the NDHIA board of directors in July 1982, "something can be approved."

Until then George Gramling, a Wisconsin native, will continue to put many miles on his auto as he travels around the country to bring the program to the people.



Most of George Gramling's time has been spent traveling across the country and explaining the DHIA's proposed quality certification program. The national director of field services visited Penn State on Tuesday and helped christen the new state DHIA building.

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