

# Developing super sire follows complex path

DE FOREST, Wisc. — A.I. organizations participate in a highly competitive industry where success depends on having the most of the best. This, and the fact that selection techniques have become more and more sophisticated, has resulted in the genetic worth of dairy bulls, used in A.I., being improved at a constantly increasing rate over the past several years.

American Breeders Service, with facilities at DeForest, Wisc. and Wellington, Col., got an early start by initiating a program of sire development and testing with Holsteins in 1962.

It all begins with the "Elite Cow List" published twice each year by the USDA. This report lists the registered Holstein cows that rank in the top two percent of the breed in terms of their ability to produce milk. The staff responsible for sire development at ABS screens this list and selects a number of cows that meet their standards for production. Type traits are examined from classification information published by the American Holstein Association.

Finally, a visit is made to the herds in which the cows that have survived this initial selection, are maintained. Each cow is inspected and if approved, an agreement is made with the owner to mate her to one of the breed's top bulls, proven through wide use in A.I.

If a bull calf results from this mating, he goes to ABS... usually at four to six months of age. After 60 days of quarantine and about the time he reaches puberty, he is

moved to the Adolescent Barn to begin his Progeny Test.

Although each bull is the result of a very carefully planned mating with both his sire and dam representing the top one to two percent of the breed's population, he has to prove himself before being entered into regular A.I. use. To get such proof, the first 700 units of semen he produces are distributed to about 85 of the 1,000 test herds located throughout the United States, that are associated with ABS in the New Generation Herd Program.

The herd participating in this program are well managed, with production equal to or above average for their state. They must be an official DHI with records used in the USDA Sire Summaries. Herd managers agree to breed 30 percent of the herd to Progeny Test bulls on a random basis and report calving ease and identification information for all calves born in the herd, to ABS.

Several benefits accrue to the herd owner for participating in the New Generation Herd Program:

- 1) Each unit of Progeny Test semen used has the potential of earning \$15.00 worth of ABS products and services.
- 2) Professional evaluation of the functional type traits is provided on each cow in the herd.
- 3) Computerized mating recommendations are provided for each cow, in order that those not caught up in the randomized sampling of the Progeny Test bulls can be bred to the bull most likely to improve her specific

weaknesses.

4) These herds have priority access to semen from recommended mating bulls that are otherwise unable to keep up with day to day demand.

5) Accurate identification of milking cows.

6) Simple, complete calving records for all cows.

7) Ownership of the first daughters of some of tomorrow's great bulls.

ABS enters over 150 Holstein bulls on test each year. After these young bulls have produced sufficient semen for their Progeny Test, they are moved in groups, to rearing barns at either DeForest, Wisconsin, or Wellington, Colorado, to begin an approximately four year waiting period. It takes this long for their daughters born in the test herds, to be reared to puberty, bred, freshened, and milked through their first lactations.

No semen is collected during this time. The bulls are maintained in loose housing, with a minimum of labor required for their proper care.

After the U.S. Department of Agriculture has collected and compiled production data on the daughters of these bulls (by this time the bulls are five to six years of age) it is reported in the Sire Summary. On the basis of this information, plus data that has been gathered as to the type traits of the daughters, a decision is made as to which bulls are placed in regular semen production.

Selection standards are such that only one out of seven joins the ranks of the "Genetic Harvest" bulls, the others go directly to slaughter.

This Progeny Test program, which began with Holsteins, was

later adapted to include the other dairy breeds. Through it, genetic improvement has accelerated to the point where bulls, considered to be all stars just five years ago, would now be unable to make the lineup.

## Limousin Breeders elect officers

DENVER, Col.—The North American Limousin Foundation elected officers and appointed new board members at its annual business meeting and open board meeting, held last Tuesday at the National Western Stock Show.

The new officers are Herman Symens, Amherst, S.D., president; Jim Davidson, Shepherd, MT, vice president; Jerry Robbe, Pueblo,

CO, secretary; Bob Yackley, Onida, SD, treasurer; Gene Raymond, Garnett, KS, member-at-large; and Don Faidley, Colfax, IA, ex-officio.

Limousin members elected the following directors to new terms: Carl Johnson, Brandon, FL;

Wyman Poe, Konawa, OK; Jim Fawley, Lynchburg, OH; Jim Davidson, Shepherd, MT; and Vernon Holcomb, Stanton, TX.

## Farming is energy efficient

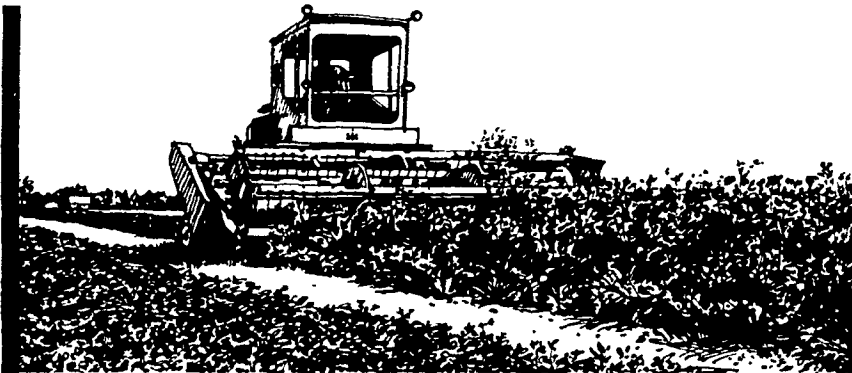
UNIVERSITY PARK — The U.S. food system is the most productive and highly developed in the world. It has reached this condition largely by the effective use of energy in all its forms. Farmers are our most effective energy managers operating the system that converts solar energy to food, using only modest amounts of fuel.

"Energy Capabilities and Opportunities" a 1981 report from

Science and Education Administration of USDA gives the breakdown of food system energy inputs as a percent of national energy consumption:

- Agricultural production, 2.9 percent;
- Agricultural Processing, 4.8 percent;
- Transportation & distribution, 1.7 percent; and
- Preparation, consumption, rural living, 7.1 percent.

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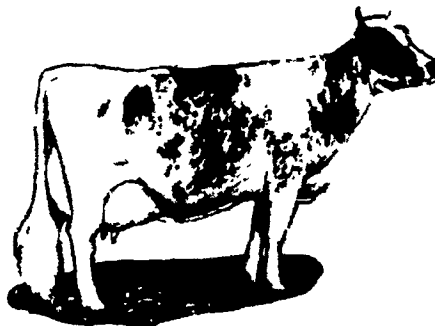
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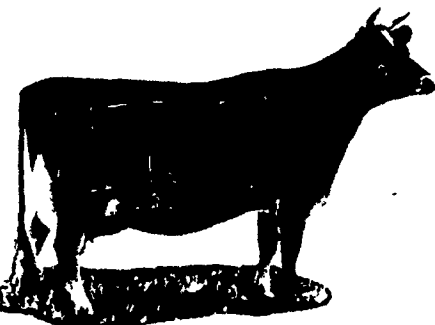


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