

Wider use of AM/PM testing urged

NEWARK, Del. — In his talk at the recent Southeastern Holstein Seminar in Newark, Del., Cornell University dairy geneticist Dr. Robert Everett stimulated a lot of lively discussion when he proposed the wider use of AM/PM testing and the identification of outstanding nonregistered cows in dairy herds for an expanded source of future proven bulls to be used in breed improvement programs.

Everett presented his ideas to a roomful of Holstein breeders and dairy farmers during the annual event, hosted by the University of Delaware. Here are some of his main points.

AM/PM testing is the use of only one milk test per day. For herd records it is acceptable when an official time recorder is included. The idea has been around since 1968 when it was introduced in Pennsylvania, New York, New England and many other states. The system involves less labor, lower travel costs and is as accurate and reliable as the usual DHIA with two tests per day, Everett said.

AM/PM testing is already used in sire evaluations in New York and New England. It is expected to be used nationwide once the necessary equations for computer calculations have been developed. Many registered dairy cows are not on unofficial AM/PM in most states.

Many nonregistered cows are the offspring of several generations of registered superior sires, Everett said. If these cows are outstanding producers, they should be used to provide outstanding sons as bulls for future breed improvement.

There are more nonregistered than registered Holstein cows in this country, the geneticist pointed out. This means a large, important segment of the U.S. dairy industry presently is being overlooked for future sire development.

According to University of Delaware extension dairy specialist George Haenlein, Everett's suggestions have considerable merit for further breed improvement. The Holstein Association already is considering type classification of nonregistered cows to make bull proofs more comprehensive and meaningful, Haenlein noted.

Less than half of all dairy cows in the U.S. are on official performance test, and of these only 56 percent are useful for sire proofing since 44 percent of all records lack sire identification.

"In the next few years the U.S. dairy industry needs to come up with some bold new ideas to survive the present economic squeeze," says Haenlein, "although such ideas may at first be as unpopular as the Red and White Holstein was just a few years ago."

The specialist predicts that official AM/PM tests will increase cow numbers for better bull selection, and at the same time lower production costs on dairy farms.

"Nonregistered cows that participate in official DHIA tests and in classifications will increase cow numbers for bull proofs and better selection, and thus increase dairy management efficiency and lower costs," Haenlein says.

"The successful dairy producer in the next few years will be the one who can lower cash costs of operation significantly — through genetics, reproduction, feeding and disease control," he says.

For example, in bull selection the best bulls to choose are those with a high proof and high repeatability. However, these often have a high price tag so they

may not be the most economical to use across the board on every cow in a farmer's herd.

Repeatability is a measure of the reliability of a bull proof. A bull with high repeatability can be used heavily across an entire herd since his proof should indicate fairly closely the improvement that can be expected in his future daughters.

In his talk, Everett pointed out that a bull with a low repeatability rating can also be used with confidence, provided the level of his proof is taken into account. Haenlein agrees, noting that a bull with a high proof but low repeatability can be expected to do as well in his daughters as one with a moderately good proof but high repeatability.

Semen price may actually favor the low repeatability bull, the

specialist says. For instance, a young bull with only a 30 percent repeatability rating will have 80 percent of his daughters within plus or minus 700 pounds of his proof.

A proven bull with 98 percent repeatability will have 90 percent of his daughters within only 100 pounds, plus or minus. This means 80 percent of the daughters of a low-repeatability bull with a proof of 800 pounds of milk, can be expected to produce between 100 to 1,500 pounds more milk than their dams. On the other hand, the bull with an 800-pound proof but high repeatability is expected to sire daughters producing between 700 to 900 pounds more than their dams.

In other words, says Haenlein, semen of the lower repeatability bull may be cheaper and can be a better buy.

Wye sale offers cows

COLLEGE PARK, Md. — This year's Wye Angus Production Sale by the University of Maryland will feature something new. For the first time in the annual sale's six-year history, the university will offer mature cows in addition to the traditional pick of yearling bulls.

All told, 27 cows four years and older will be auctioned with 36 yearling bulls "to give the industry access to germ plasm considered excess to the university's research needs," according to Dr. Eldin Leighton, an animal geneticist

hired by the university's Agricultural Experiment Station to oversee research on the herd.

The sale will offer "a pick of the herd embryo flush," a process of which a successful bidder will choose a top herd cow to provide embryos to transfer, according to Leighton.

The 1984 Wye Angus Production Sale is scheduled for Monday, March 26, at noon at the university's Wye Research and Education Center, near Queenstown.

A Public Sale of grade Holsteins and farm machinery was held March 1 by Gideon F. And Elizabeth L. Lapp, 2 miles southwest of Paradise on Paradise Lane, Lancaster Co., Pa.

Some prices were: mule \$2300, grey mare \$1025, pair of mules \$3525 & \$3850, bale box \$110, N.H. 271 baler \$1800, Pequea spreader \$2050, silage cutter \$225, tedder \$575, Int. mower \$1000, Rem. Model 10 12 gauge gun \$210, Win. 308 rifle \$410, Model 12 Winchester \$390 and Stevens over/under gun \$110.

The 36 Holstein milk cows averaged \$1133 with the top cow bringing \$2000 and the 2nd high \$1525.

Steve Petersheim was the auctioneer.

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A Public Sale of farm machinery and heifers was held February 29 by Stephen U. Stoltzfus, 1 mile northeast of Gap on Umbletown Road, Lanc. Co., Pa.

Some prices included: hydraulic plow \$2325, N.H. 456 bar mower \$1625, N.I. 323 corn-picker \$2500, Pequea tedder \$1000, N.H. 30' elevator \$1050, hydraulic unit \$300, wagons \$680 & \$825, Cagle boom sprayer \$1200, hay rake \$100, collar \$45, Sputnik \$1100 and harness \$75.

Pairs of horses sold for \$2900, \$3300 and \$1700. The grade Holstein heifers brought \$1100, \$1000, \$900, \$825, \$580, \$570, etc.

Auctioneer was Steve Petersheim.

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The Ro-Ru Farm Dispersal was held March 1 by Roger Buch, R.D., Fleetwood, north of Oley, Berks Co., Pa. There were 42 different buyers present on a cold day.

The 70 head of registered Holsteins averaged \$1200. The top cow, Ro-Ru Glendell Miranda sold for \$3400 and the 2nd high was Valiant Aurora for \$3300.

Backus Associates, Inc. Sale Managers & Aucts.

PUBLIC AUCTION

FARM MACHINERY - FARM ITEMS
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