

Delmarva cattlemen explore options



GEORGETOWN, Del. — After spending a lot of time and energy planning a feeder calf sale that never got off the ground, some 20 members of the Delmarva Cattlemen's Association met Nov. 16 at Chesapeake College to discuss what they can do as a group to improve the marketing situation on Delmarva.

According to University of Delaware extension livestock specialist Ken Kephart, who attended the meeting, president Henry Walls hit the nail on the head with his comment about producers' marketing strategy— "It's raining today and too wet to do anything else, so I guess I'll take some calves to Lancaster."

Dan Enterline, treasurer for the association, recapped their efforts to develop a calf sale. "Delmarva is a spring calving area so we felt a fall sale would be feasible. We drew up a set of health standards modeled after those used in Virginia and planned the sale for October, a prime weaning time on the Eastern Shore. A USDA grader agreed to assist, and Chester Lee Carroll and his staff at Carroll's Sales Company were willing to do

everything they could to accommodate us."

Enterline and Ken Kephart visited several farms in late summer to estimate the calves available. At that point, things still looked promising. But as the sale date approached, the numbers just weren't there. Enterline concluded, "We had to cancel the sale. If we had given the go-ahead, we would have done more damage than good."

Frank Bonsall, secretary for the organization, suggested some alternatives to a calf sale. "In Pennsylvania, dealers or graders go to the farms. They grade the calves and give a price on the spot." Calves then go to a collection point prior to final delivery.

Another method, Bonsall said, is to have buyers and producers call in to a central clearinghouse that compiles calf numbers and needs for feeders. Or listings can be periodically published.

Dick Whaley, one of the association's directors, also spoke at the November meeting. He updated the group on proposed changes in membership structure

of the National Cattlemen's Association, plus two other national issues—rules on tax shelters and feed-grade antibiotics.

Before adjourning, reports Kephart, the group also discussed possible topics for future meetings. They decided to hold a daytime meeting in late January with a guest speaker and producer panel on culling procedures and the use of performance tested bulls.

For more information on the Delmarva Beef Cattlemen's Association, contact Kephart at the Sussex County extension office in Georgetown, Del. (302-856-5250)



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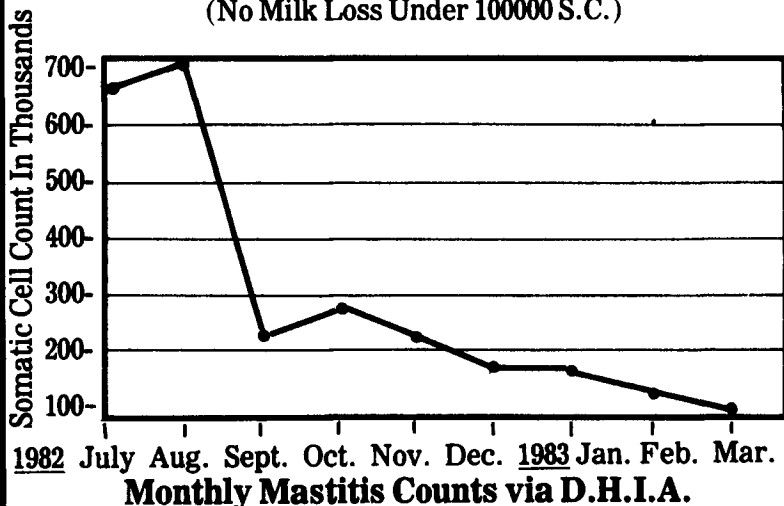
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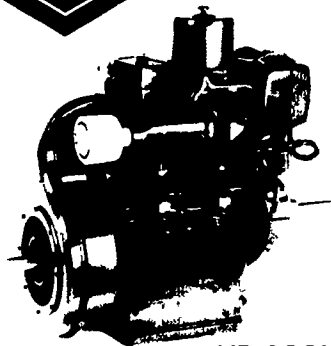
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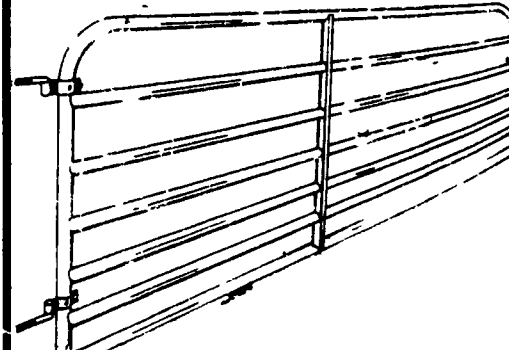
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