

The Dairy Business

By Newton Bair

How Many First Borns In Your Barn?

Have you ever counted the cows in your milking string that are the first offspring of their dams? How many of your 2-year olds produced a heifer calf that was raised as a replacement? You may be surprised at the number of first offspring you are milking.

Before we go any further, there is nothing bad about having the first offspring of a heifer in the milking string. In fact, it might be quite advantageous. It depends on how careful you were in selecting your heifers in the first place, and then how particular you were to breed her to a good sire.

The all too common practice on many dairy farms is to run a young, unproven bull in with the heifers of breeding age. It seems quick and easy, and saves a lot of hassle in watching for heats, tying them up, calling the AI inseminator, etc. But what about the consequences? How many of these first calves of unknown quality end up in the herd?

In a herd that makes a practice of breeding the heifers to a young "cow freshener" bull, there may be several generations of that kind of breeding. The 2-year old, herself out of an unknown sire, may produce a heifer calf from another unknown bull mating. This could continue - ad infinitum - if you continue the practice.

As many as one-third to one-half of a herd may be from the young

unproven sire. Sure, he may be a bull out of your neighbor's best cow, and maybe his sire was a big-name stud. But the chances of getting offspring comparable to that of your best AI sires is considerably lowered.

You seldom have the time or the resources to investigate the real genetic value of a young bull. And if you do research him thoroughly and find him to be a really high indexed, potentially good herd sire, wouldn't he be more valuable doing his thing in a AI stud?

The Cooperative AI bull studs are better equipped to evaluate and plan the matings of the future herd sires than the average dairyman is, unless that dairyman is a real student of breeding genetics.

Most of us are just too busy doing the other necessary chores. We have a tough enough decision in breeding, when we make a daily choice among the proven bulls. Someone with more specialized expertise has made the first selection, and then proven then through DHIA records and Breed type classification.


Even if you are buying many of your herd replacements in order to upgrade the herd, you seldom choose a cow that is sired by an unknown sire. Too many of those critters never get to the sale ring anyway. You will naturally want to buy a cow from a well-know sire, hoping that she will improve the genetics of your herd.

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product packages. Only products conforming to federal and state standards of identity can be certified to carry this seal.

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It all boils down to the fact that breeding is made easy for the average dairy with the large number of proven, genetically superior sires that are available through AI.

Even the Young Sire program


that is used to prove the planned matings in a Co-op Bull stud has an excellent chance of reducing the risk of unproven matings.

All of those young sires have genetic backgrounds that are far above average. Nearly any young bull from a carefully selected

mating, awaiting proof on a Co-op Stud's young Sire program has the capability to improve the genetics of the average good herd.

The same cannot be said of the average "cow freshener" bull, especially of first generation cows from this kind of breeding.

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64	2312	.167 (7 ga.)	17'-11"	*150 to 250
64	3010	.167 (7 ga.)	23'-10"	*250 to 350
96	4280	.240 (1/4")	13'- 7"	*250 to 310
96	4723	.240 (1/4")	16'- 0"	*310 to 370
96	6075	.240 (1/4")	21'- 4"	*420 to 510
96	7425	.240 (1/4")	26'- 8"	*550 to 650
120	7700	.240 (1/4")	20'- 3"	*650
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