

The Dairy Business

By
Newton Bair



Can longevity be bred for?

Since we only pass this way once, a long lifetime spent on this earth always seems to be desirable for humans. Likewise, dairy breeders take pride and pleasure in an animal that lives a long and productive life.

What limits the life span of a cow in the milking herd? It surely is not what we associate with the human life span. We humans are usually allowed to live out our years until we die of "natural causes," including old age. Not many cows are allowed the privilege of living their full potential life span.

If you think about it, even our best breeding animals must prove themselves worthy of continuation in the herd almost daily, or out they go. A perfectly healthy cow, with no life-threatening malady, might become worthless in the dairy barn for some other reason.

As a breeder, she must get bred. No matter how good her genetic backing, or the popularity of her sire and dam, she must ultimately make acceptable production records. And even if she has a calf, and is milking her heart out, she must survive all of the hazards of the barn and feedlot and stanchion.

After all this, a cow must either escape the inevitable bout with mastitis or survive the treatment. To say nothing of the dozens of other maladies that can do her in or reduce her usefulness as a breeder. This might even include a nice, even temperament and

lovable personality. Cows have been known to get the axe for some trait that has nothing to do with production or long life!

So what actually constitutes longevity in a cow?

I doubt that it is the same thing that we associate with a long life in humans.

Your grandpa and father might live to be ninety years old, and that usually portends a long life for you, regardless of how productive you are, or how much money you make. You do inherit your years from ancestors, aside from the hazards of modern living. So, in a way, humans might be bred for longevity as predicted by our ancestral life spans.

Surely there are inheritable traits that contribute to the life span of a cow. Just as in humans, there is some degree of resistance or susceptibility to diseases that could shorten the usefulness of a breeder.

They are extremely hard to define, and much research and observation must be done before the knowledge can be used in breeding.

Meanwhile, breeding for longevity alone might be mostly a myth. When you realize how many cows leave the herd for other reasons, it makes more sense to consider those reasons that have kept her useful, than to the number of years she spends in the herd.

Functional type, as defined in

USDA Begins Dairy Indemnity Payments

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The first of a series of periodic dairy indemnity payments to dairy producers whose milk was removed from the market because their herds were contaminated by the pesticide heptachlor began in July said Secretary of Agriculture Richard E. Lyng.

"The supplemental appropriations legislation signed into law by President Reagan July 2 included \$8 million earmarked for these indemnity payments," Lyng said.

Heptachlor-contaminated feed sold to some dairy producers in Arkansas, Oklahoma and Missouri resulted in the contamination of milk. This milk was removed from the market by public regulatory agencies. "The maximum permitted level of heptachlor in milk is 0.1 parts per million. Some of the milk from the three States had over 10 parts per million," Lyng said.

In mid-March Lyng dispatched an emergency dairy contamination task force to conduct an on-the-spot assessment of the situation in the affected area. Based on the task force's findings on milk production losses and the number of dairy cows under

quarantine, a request was made to Congress for funds to cover indemnification payments for milk and dairy products that had to be dumped.

"Dairy herds fell into three categories," Lyng said. "Some producers were quarantined and not allowed to market their milk for a brief period until it was determined that the milk from the herd was not contaminated. Some with low levels of contamination were quarantined for a longer period and then were allowed to resume marketing of milk after the level of contamination was

reduced to an acceptable level. Others, more seriously contaminated, are still not permitted to market their milk.

It can take anywhere from a few weeks to as long as a year or more before a dairy herd is removed from quarantine, depending on the initial level of contamination."

Payments to dairy producers cover losses for the amount of milk that is required to be dumped. Indemnity payments to dairy processors are for the market value of milk and milk products destroyed, minus any salvage value.

PSU Receives Tobacco Grant

LANDISVILLE — R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Co. presented Pennsylvania State University with grants totaling \$9,500.

A research grant was provided to support studies by Dr. John

Reynolds will find a \$1,000 scholarship for Excellence in Agriculture at the university.

Dr. Charles D. Sopher, senior R&D agronomist at Reynolds

Yocum on partial outside curing, tobacco breeding, and the effects of plant maturity on tobacco quality. An Extension grant was provided which will fund tobacco grower training and support for

the Lancaster tobacco show. A grant was made to the dean of the College of Agriculture for use in the enhancement of agricultural programs within the college. When a 1986 recipient is selected,

Tobacco, presented the checks for the grants to Dr. John Yocum at the Southeastern Field Research Laboratory.

Since 1979, R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company has contributed \$92,350 to tobacco research, extension, and education programs

at Pennsylvania State University. Since 1962, Reynolds' contributions for similar programs at land-grant universities in tobacco producing states have totaled more than \$8.4 million.

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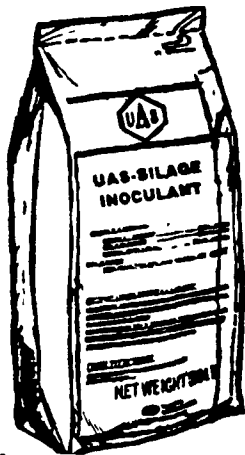
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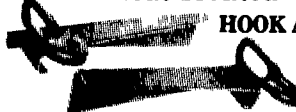


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