

Linear-Mate Aids Sire Selection

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Since Atlantic's Linear-Mate program was announced to members nearly four years ago, thousands of cows have been evaluated in detail and sires recommended by Linear-Mate Specialists. Progeny resulting from the earliest matings are now milking in members' herds who were among the first users of this new program. Recent farm visits with a few of them in south-central

Pennsylvania reveal how Linear-Mate is working to develop breeding problems for herd improvement.

Dale Fischer

"Some people have to cull 50% of their young cows, but we hardly cull any. We're proud of our young cows," says Dale Fischer of Fulton County, who farms with his son, Tom. Their DHIA rolling herd average for May was 19,548M and 713F on 88 Holsteins, and the heifers are contributing their share toward this high level.

With this low culling rate, Fischer comments further "We've sold Atlantic-sired heifers and often they're among the highest producing cows in the new herd as two-year-olds. That tells us how our Linear-Mate is working!"

This herd followed sire recommendations from Linear-Mate's predecessor — the Mate-Rite program — for many years and the Fischers are building on several top producers that they have bred and developed. Topping the list is a Marvex that tested up to 145 lbs. of



Atlantic member Clifford Hawbaker discusses his herd breeding program with Area 2 Supervisor John Stevenson and Linear-Mate Specialist John Frey.



Franklin County member Dennis Bricker and his family with a typey, good producing daughter of Mandate.

milk per day. A Mariner has made 120M/d, and they are very happy with the stature and good udder on her VG-85 Oak Star daughter.

Fischer's breeding goals are to hold up the milk level while improving fat test. Generally, he wants to improve the conformation traits of udders, rumps, and up-standingness. Sires currently recommended most on his Linear-Mate printout are Basic, Steady, Bachelor, Mil-Nor, and Hilton.

"We prefer Linear-Mate because of the genetic improvement and consistency we see," Dale says. He also likes the features in Atlantic's program that lets him add new cows after freshening, or apply new proven sires to previously-evaluated cows.

"It helps to have another person look at your cows," this member says. "When I see them every day, I don't notice the bad legs, narrow front ends, and other weaknesses. It's a big 'plus' to have someone

come in who only sees my cows once or twice a year. A Linear-Mate Specialist is 100% objective."

Atlantic's 28-year veteran Technician in Fulton County, Dale Souders, says "Dale (Fischer) knows which bull he wants to use for each cow, so I follow his requests when I get to his farm." Souders also likes to check the "Dairyman Workability" analysis in the sire directory. He sees it as another aid to improving herd uniformity.

Has Fischer ever wanted to AI his own cows? "We've got too much other work to do, so we prefer to call a Technician," he answers. How about other AI bulls? "We've always gotten good results with Atlantic, so why should I switch?" he reasons.

Dennis Bricker

On a very well-kept farm tucked back off the main roads west of Chambersburg in Franklin

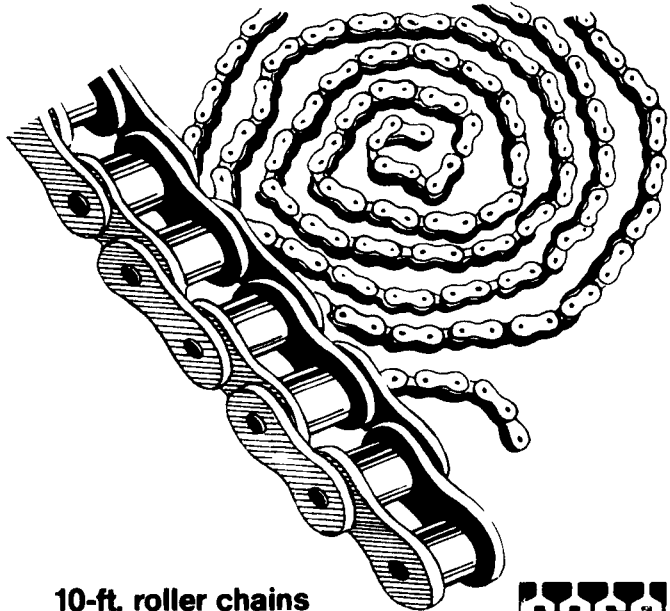
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PARTS VALUE OF THE MONTH.

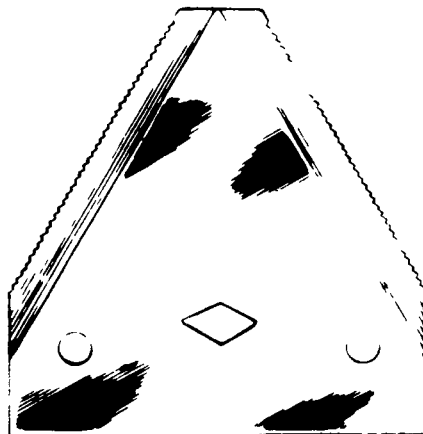
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