

# DHIA Head

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through the mail. This is really a little ways off, but we're in the front edge of that. I think it will be essential certainly in a couple of years. It's already there for some people.

Q. I think you're also exploring forage tests and soil tests into the whole record information that you might be supplying the dairymen. Is that still in the works? What is the thinking there?

At this point, there is not a high degree of activity in that area. My own conception of testing, production information and managerial use thereof is that submission of forage samples at the same time you submit milk samples should bring you back results on both sides at approximately the same time at which point your feeding decisions are made for the coming months. This is really based upon two factors: one, production level; two, what's coming out of the home grown forage and how do you have to change to meet the production level. Unfortunately within the system we really are not in a position to do it right now.

Q. You did redesign the regional field districts and made some changes in personnel. I think as an economy move. Would you explain that just a bit although it is a little old by now?

When I first got to Pennsylvania, I did take a look at the operational regions. At the time there were six of them around the state. I think effective on April 14, I did change it to five. Not totally an economy move. Unless one construes economy to be coincidental with efficiency. I think when you look at the state of Pennsylvania in an attempt to administer a service program, a couple of factors have to come to mind. One density of cattle and herd numbers, which is

members, that both are to be serviced in an area or potentially can be serviced in an area. Two because of the geographical terrain in the state, you have to look to see where the roads are. You don't drive north or south or east or west very easily. You curve around the mountains. Three cattle tend to pocket around topographical features and also around where the major milk sheds are.

The six-region setup that we had previously, while it did admit to fewer miles driven in some of the regions, it really didn't reflect very accurately the density of the cattle population in those regions or the difficulty in servicing them. The major milk sheds, for example, were outlined in the current regions with one down the west side of the state and one across the north. Then there is the heavy southeast and two of them moving over toward the center to come up with the five regions. That's ruffly where your milk sheds lie. So yes, economy. But probably more so than that an ideal efficiency.

Q. One of your concerns and interests is the whole educational process for dairymen that can be derived both from your office and from the records that he gets from DHIA. Would you like to give a few things you are doing or would like to do in the way of additional education and service from the association?

Where the use of records in education is concerned, it's almost a shared function between the university Extension Service and to some extent DHIA. I like to think we have a good working relationship on that. When county agents, for example, hold record workshops out in the counties, any time we are aware of them or asked to do so, we have our people

there. Correspondingly, if we set any up, normally the Extension Service will go with us. I guess I do get more and more concerned about the herds that come on test for a while and drop off. Because from the time they came on test, nobody really got with them to explain, even in very rudimentary detail, what can be done with those records. What does it mean if a cow is score four, score five or score two or three. What's the average annual milk loss multiplied by milk price, which gives you the annual dollar loss? These things are critical if one is to make use of the records that he is paying for. I think we're lacking something here.

Q. Who are the potential additional users of DHI and DHIA and how do we convince them to get involved in this kind of program?

The potential users of DHIA probably run into several general classes. I'll start with dairymen who currently are not on the test. That's about 53 percent of the dairymen in Pennsylvania. Without attempting to classify all of them, there are people who simply have no use for it I'm sure. Statistically I think that's a fact of life. I think there are probably more of them out there who look at the current program and say that it really has nothing for them. That might be telling us two things. One, in some cases they might not have looked at what we are offering. Second and perhaps even more important, in some cases we're probably not offering what they need. That's the part that I'm most interested in. That's the one we have to get around. That's where the dairymen are concerned.

Our further use is in the reference. I think we should remember that when a dairyman pays for a test, it goes into his records. But his records go much further than that. They go up through USDA for genetic

evaluation. They go through the Breed Association for pedigree, the national Extension as well. But without bothering to list all of them, the point I would make is that while it's true that dairymen's records that are returned to him from the records processing center, very shortly after test, the records keep going and ultimately come back to him in cow indexes that may prove some genetic evaluation. This system has to be kept in order. These are all uses of records we have for many years. Perhaps it will become of greater importance very shortly to some others currently not in that chain. Most noteworthy there are probably big cooperatives and veterinarians. Veterinarians probably head the list.

Q. So what we're really saying, if I'm hearing you right, is that roughly half of the dairy cows in Pennsylvania are in essence being used for all the records that all the dairymen really use, whether it be through the breeding organizations or wherever. So that means that there is another half that really aren't factored in and could have a great deal to do with the final outcome it would seem.

Yes. Not only final outcome but, without attempting to waiver elements of injustice, first nonofficial tests in Pennsylvania in an area numbering about 5,000 herds I think provides (from a Pennsylvania standpoint) basis for genetic evaluation, which then can be used by everyone else who is on test or not on test. I think this has to be a pricing consideration as well.

Q. Where do you see DHIA, DHI, DHIR heading or where would you like to see them head? What direction do you see us going five years from now, 10 years from now?

I think I have one general observation on direction of DHIA and records. That is perhaps in the past we've been too inclined to think

about how a new report should be put together for the use of a dairyman. Then we would ride through that report and it would come back month after month, year after year. Maybe what we should be doing instead is learning to simulate the information in such a matter that it can be sent back in any form that the dairyman wants it.

Maybe this is why we have 47 percent... on test as opposed to a larger percentage. Maybe we're not furnishing what is necessary? I think that's a realistic consideration that we're probably looking for headway.

Q. To those dairymen who are not on test or associated with any formal testing organization, what would you say to those people?

I would say first of all that it's truly their choice whether or not they test. I think under the economic conditions they currently have, some kind of record keeping system is absolutely imperative so that you know where you're at. You have some assessment to where you're going with DHIA. If the current structure of the report and of the system is not at the most use to the dairymen, I think that we have the ability to change to furnish him with what he does need.

Second point I would probably make to such a person is we often hear DHIA test results compared to say independent labs and so forth. Let's think about that for a minute. When is come to soil and forage analyses, DHIA doesn't sell ..... They have no invested interest. When it comes to milk sample analysis, we don't purchase the milks. We have no invested interest. Probably when it comes to manure analysis, hopefully we don't sell that either. The point I'm making here is that DHI is in fact independent. There is no reason built into the system to do anything except try to be accurate.

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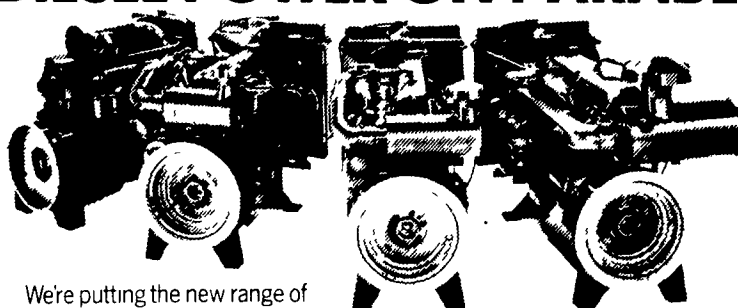
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