

## Opening Holstein Herdbook

(Continued from Page A1)

sire does not have to be known. This foundation cow would have to be properly identified and a minimal fee would have to be paid (\$1 has been suggested).

Female offspring of this cow, if sired by a registered Holstein, are eligible for registration under Step 2. Identification of the sire and a higher fee (perhaps \$4) would be required. Step 3 would entail a repeat of the previous step.

Female offspring from registered sires and Step 3 dams would qualify for Step 4 registration, the first to include provisional status in the herdbook. Such animals must be enrolled in the association's classification program and, as cows, in the official Dairy Herd Improvement testing program. These animals would carry a "QE" designation — for qualified entry — in the herdbook. The cost of registering them would be the same as that for registering other Holsteins.

Finally, all male and female offspring of these QE cows would be eligible for registration in the herdbook without a suffix. Only Step 4 animals are required to be alive at the time registration is sought.

Not surprisingly, the proposal has struck a sour note among a number of members. Critics have accused Holstein Association staffers of supporting the plan solely as a means of boosting income. They have claimed allowing grade bloodlines into the registry would expose the breed to some of the deleterious recessive genes registered breeders have taken pains to avoid.

In a recent letter to Holstein World magazine, the directors of the Manitowoc County, Wis., Holstein organization blasted the task force plan as dangerous, unfair to current members and likely to lower the price of registered stock. They said approval could cause a boycott of association programs by disgruntled members.

Several participants in the recent annual meeting of the Maryland Holstein Association were equally outspoken. Brian Osborne of Cecil County, Md., said, "If we register grade Holsteins, it would be a disservice to all registered breeders in the nation." Both he and Bob Knutsen, also of Cecil County, said allowing others a short-cut to registered status would devalue the time and money they spent developing all-registered herds.

These criticisms and others also were voiced at the Culpeper meeting, where task force member David Slusser, a Crawford County, Pa., dairyman, made a case for opening the herdbook.

Slusser, who is president of Atlantic Breeders Cooperative, said giving some grade animals registered status would increase membership in the association, broaden the base of animals available for genetic progress, help the finances of Holstein organizations and expand the market for registered animals — all arguments made in the 14-page report produced by national association staffers and included in the thick packet of material given to forum participants.

He also noted that the Holstein Association is the only major dairy breed registry that has not initiated a grade-up program in recent years. The report extensively quotes the leaders of these other breed groups.

However, Slusser's main argument involved the issue's implications for the future of a changing industry. At a time when several bull studs have turned to sampling grade bulls, a market heretofore reserved exclusively for registered breeders, Slusser said some changes are needed. Reportedly, grade cows account for 85 percent of all domestic semen sales.

"From here on, we're in a different ballgame," he said. "And, if we don't do something, we could wind up playing second fiddle."

Later, he asked, "Do we have to have a grade Valiant before we do something?"

Slusser also claimed that some grade dairymen have a lot to offer their registered counterparts in the areas of both type and production. "I've seen some herds of grade cows with udders on them I'd love to have."

Moreover, the widespread use of semen from registered bulls already has made many grade cows the genetic equivalent of registered ones, he said. For instance, the genetic component of an animal that has been bred artificially for four generations — the

minimum requirement in the task force plan — is at least 94 percent registered.

But Slusser did not go unchallenged at the meeting. Jason Myers, a Carroll County, Md., breeder, said he is not worried about registered breeders losing their genetic edge over the industry as a whole. Nor is he convinced, he said, by the testimony of scientific studies that say grade Holsteins are genetically equivalent to registered ones.

Other forum participants were troubled by the fact that the proposal, as currently written, does not impose any restrictions on the quality of the grades allowed to register. Slusser said he opposed the imposition of such criteria, arguing that financial considerations will restrict entry to top-quality animals.

Marlin Hoff, another Carroll County breeder, said the price tags for the grade-up process have been set too low. As a result, it may encourage dairymen who now register all their calves to let the papers lapse and use the grade-up process to re-register only their promising animals. "To me, it's a

## Dairy Of Distinction

(Continued from Page A1)

been broken down into 10 Dairy of Distinction districts per state. New Jersey contains one district. A maximum of 10 awards will be made per district. Award winning dairies will receive an attractive

slap in the face to the guy who registers all the time," he said.

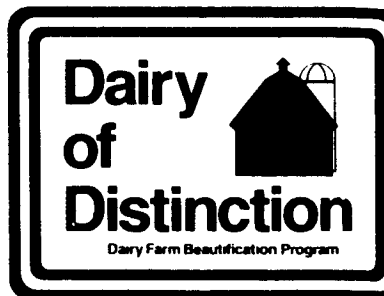
Slusser acknowledged the current version of the task force plan is not without flaws. He said he hopes some changes will be made before a decision is made, hopefully at the 1989 convention. But he urged those at the forum to support the concept in principle.

Few of the Culpeper participants were willing to do so publicly. Nonetheless, Slusser said he is optimistic that many association members, particularly those with mixed herds — part registered and part grade — eventually would support it.

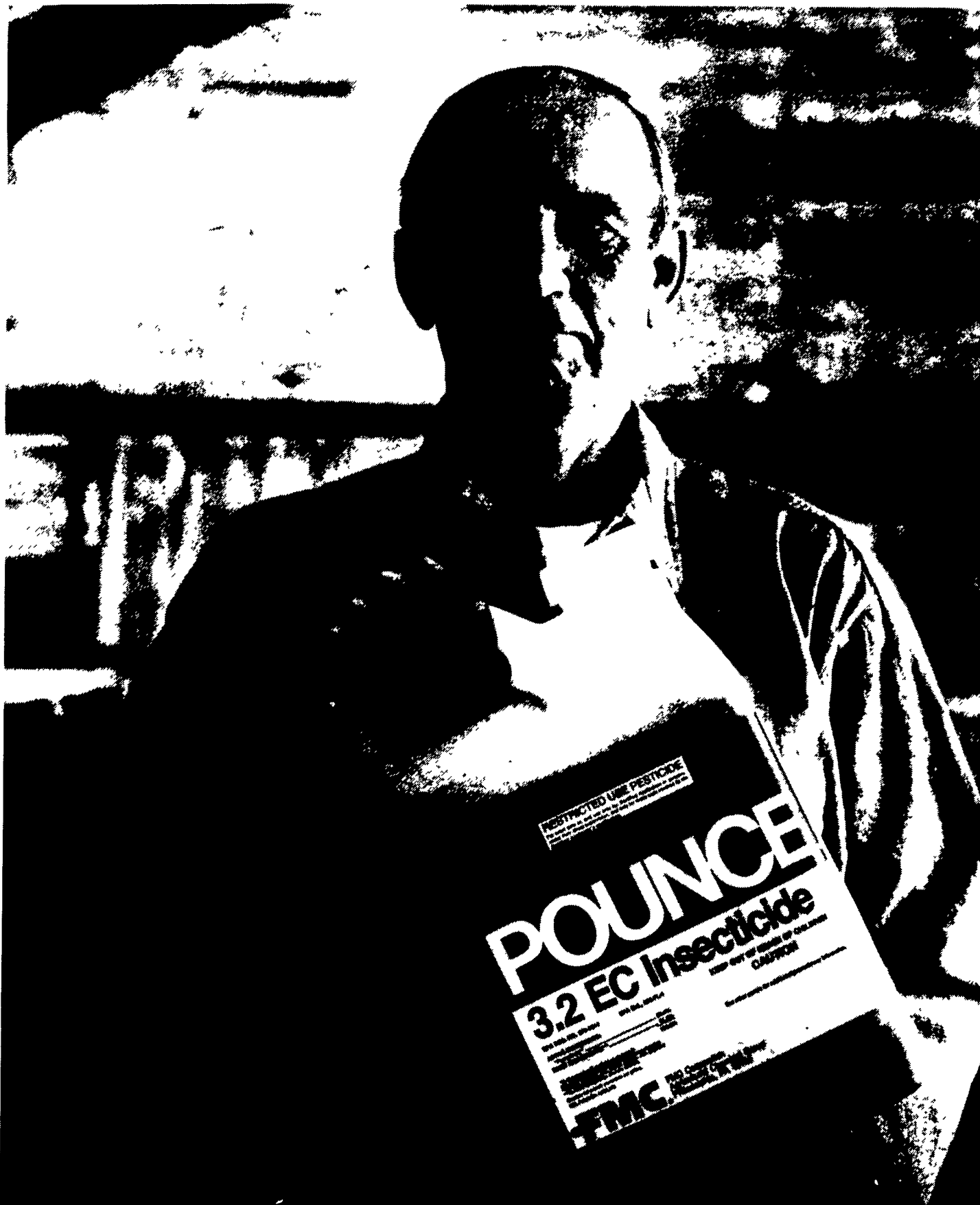
The results of an anonymous straw poll of forum participants appears to back this contention. Those in favor of a grade-up program in principle outnumbered those opposed 23 to 17.

18" x 24" sign identifying their farm as a Dairy of Distinction.

Applications for the program in Pennsylvania and New York are due by April 15. Judging teams



will visit farms during the month of May in order to select this year's winners. New Jersey applications will be due during the month of May; an exact date has not been set. Judging in New Jersey will take place in June. Further information and applications for the Dairy of Distinction program can be obtained by calling the American Dairy Association and Dairy Council toll free at (800) HOT-MILK (in Pennsylvania and New Jersey) and (800) ADA-MILK (in New York).



FMC Corporation, Agricultural Chemical Group, 2000 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103. Pounce and FMC are registered trademarks of FMC Corporation © 1987 FMC Corporation. Pounce is a restricted use pesticide. Read and follow label directions. Lorsban is a registered trademark of Dow Chemical Company. See your dealer or FMC representative for terms and conditions of the Pounce cutworm and true armyworm guarantee.