

Management Approach Yields Profits in Beef, Dairy Industries

SAN ANTONIO, TX. — A total management approach to increasing the profitability of dairy and beef cattle herds will yield significant returns, speakers representing the American Association of Bovine Practitioners (AABP) told more than 100 editors, publishers, and advertising executives at a meeting of the Livestock Publications Council in San Antonio.

Donald B. Hudson, D.V.M., of North Platte, NE, president of the AABP, discussed beef cattle practice, and Thomas J. Fuhrmann, D.V.M., of Tempe, Az., AABP vice president, discussed dairy cattle practice. The importance of herd-health management was a common theme for a team of veterinarians representing the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), AABP, and two other national veterinary organizations at the meeting.

Hudson said the first step in establishing an effective herd-management program is to assess the needs of the herd. "Once we establish what's occurring in the herd, we can set up vaccination programs, nutrition programs, reproductive efficiency plans, and other management programs to prevent disease. It takes a continuing effort over a period of years to develop an effective herd-health management program, and what's right for one herd will not work for another—even for a neighboring herd," he said.

Key tools in a herd-health management program may include bull breeding-soundness evaluation, pregnancy evaluation, heifer replacement, control of internal and external parasites, implanting, nutritional supplementation, vaccination, castration, dehorning, crossbreeding, and pasture rotation. According to a study at Mississippi State University, such a program will increase income from a 100-cow herd by \$5,600 to \$10,000 at a cost of \$1,500 to \$2,000.

"We're talking about a total program of production medicine that can be applied to both cow/

calf and feedlot operations," Hudson said. For example, a cow/calf program covers all the factors influencing pounds of calf weaned per cow exposed, including heifer selection, development and breeding, post-partum cow reproduction, and weaning weights. The goal is to integrate production, health, and financial information to maximize profitability.

Fuhrmann said an effective dairy herd-health program breaks down specific functions within the management process and evaluates the cost-effectiveness of each. "It requires a strong working relationship between practitioner and dairyman," he said. "It's not efficient to spend valuable professional time diagnosing individual animal problems. We need to be developing a program to prevent health problems by honing in on the needs of the whole herd.

"Milk production at our best herds now averages over 23,000 pounds per cow per year, up from 17,000 pounds just a few years ago. Some individual cows are now producing over 40,000 pounds of milk," Fuhrmann said.

This increased efficiency is due to improved herd management and application of new technology, Fuhrmann said. For example, use of efficient reproductive health-management practices before, during and after calving can earn producers thousands of dollars more each year, he said.

A 95 percent net calf crop is a realistic goal for a reproductive health-management program, Fuhrmann said, but it is too rarely achieved. "Management observation of heat will significantly increase results," he said.

A Fuhrmann said a dairy herd-health program might include reproduction, mastitis control, nutrition, and replacement rearing. Computer software programs now available make it possible to monitor performance using microcomputers, he added.

"Dairy profitability is influenced greatly by management decision-making on herd replace-

ments and cull cows. The progressive dairy practitioner can have a major impact on dairy clients by assisting them in making appropriate herd replacement decisions," Fuhrmann said.

Among new technologies now increasing productivity in dairy herds is a fast and reliable progesterone test, used to determine when the cow is in heat. Artificial insemination and embryo transfers also are yielding significant results in increased productivity.

The availability of high-quality genetic semen for artificial insemination has made possible a degree of selectivity never before possible, according to Fuhrmann. Growth-promotant implants are being used successfully, and other promising advances in technology are on the horizon, including the use of growth hormones and application of techniques of genetic engineering.

Nutrition is another area where new knowledge is providing

opportunities for increased reproductive efficiency, he said. Cows in a dairy herd are now commonly grouped according to productivity and fed different rations to maximize results.

Joining Hudson and Fuhrmann in meetings with the Council were representatives of the American Association of Swine Practitioners (AASP) and the American Association of Sheep and Goat Practitioners (AASGP).

Valiant Daughter Tops Sulbra

BY BARBARA MILLER
Lycoming Co. Correspondent
TROY — A Valiant daughter sold for \$5,500 to Tom Comstock, Rome, and was the top selling bovine in the seventh annual Sulbra Sell-A-Bration Sale at the Troy Fairgrounds on Sept. 15. Consignors were Ken Young and Dwayne Haight.

According to Ron Wood, reader of pedigrees, Kenview Valisa ET possessed a plus \$160 value and was out of an extremely high testing family. He said an AI firm had expressed interest in mating her.

Bringing \$3,300, an Arlinda Rotate daughter just recently fresh

commanded the second highest selling price which was paid by Dr. Ben Turner and Jim Reap of New York state. Consignor was John Lehman, Harrison Valley, Pa.

Jo-beth Nutmeg Rotate Nel-Twin is a Rotate daughter from an Excellent Nugget and was sold with her heifer calf.

The third highest selling entry was a two-year-old Mandingo daughter, Hidden-View Mandingo Lacey, purchased by Teresa Kissling, Hidden View Farms, Robeson, Pa. Lacey was making close to 22,000 pounds of milk as a two-year-old and sold bred to Trifecta for \$3200. Consignor was Don

Welk of Stonehurst Farm, Pa.

Although the sale average of \$1514 for 62 mature head of cattle was down some from last year's sale average, Ron Wood, reader of pedigrees, said he thought the sale went well taking into account present farming conditions.

"This was the best line-up cow for cow, in my opinion, that we've had in the past seven years. They were an extremely uniform group with no poor ones in it," he remarked.

The sale was sponsored by Sulbra Breeders Holstein Club. Sale chairman were Tom Comstock and Ray Hopppaugh.

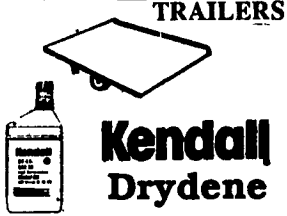
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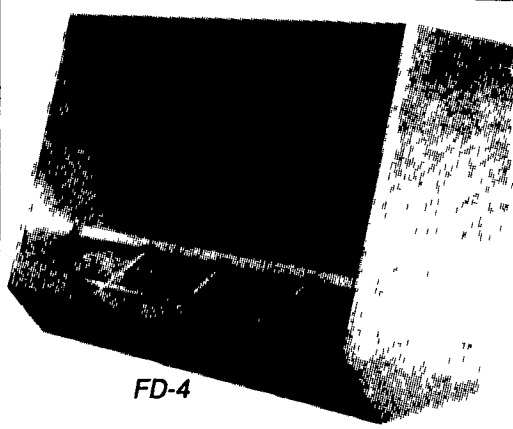
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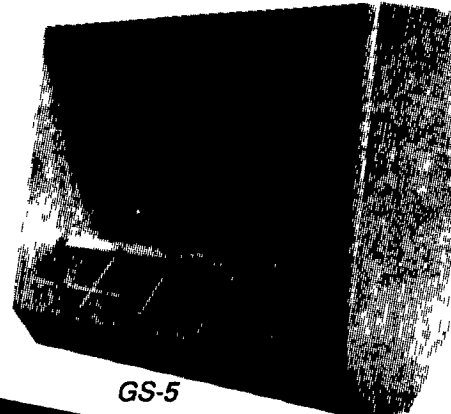
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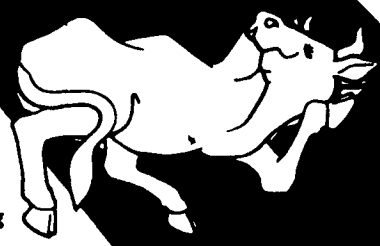
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