

# FOCUS

Pennsylvania

Dairy Herd

Improvement Association

Call 1-800-DHI-TEST for service or information.

## How Productive Is Productivity?

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Mifflin County Extension Agent

Recognition for the sake of recognition is probably not good. But, recognition for excellent achievements is just and deserving. The Pennsylvania Dairy Industry deserves recognition because it has made some outstanding achievements. The annual reports are in for the Pennsylvania Dairy Herd Improvement Association.

This is no minor accomplishment. There are just over 5,000 herds on test in the state. The accomplishments of the dairymen in the state are the result of their production management skills. I think a tip-of-the-hat and a round of applause, in recognition of their accomplishments, is in order.

All recognition for the state dairymen is deserved, but, have we missed something? Do we produce

milk to make records, or to make money? That might sound like a foolish question, but I think it deserves expanding.

Of course, the dairy producers goal is to be profitable. But at what effect to production? Is the highest possible level of production the most profitable? Sometimes it is, but most often, I think, it isn't. I would be willing to speculate that some of the herds that were not even close to the top of the list may have had profit figures envious of more than three-fourths of the total number of herds.

My point is that, if the reason you produce milk is to make money, the records you keep (whether it's DHIA or any other record keeping system) should be used to adjust inputs (expenses) to maximize profitable output. With this attitude of profitability, we should be looking at figures other

than total milk, fat and protein. The most important figure becomes income over feed cost. That is the best measure of profitable milk production.

I have considered creating my own brag sheet based on this income over feed cost figure. Would there be a changing of ranking using this method rather than total production? I don't know. I would be interesting!

I hope I haven't taken away from the recognition that is certainly deserved for our state dairymen. But I hope I have reminded them that records are to be used to assist in decision making to make your dairy enterprise as profitable as possible. That might mean lower production. But, the only way you can determine what is most profitable is to keep, and use, production records to make sound decisions based on profitability.

## How Does Your Herd Compare?

STATE COLLEGE (Centre Co.)—This data is pulled from Pennsylvania DHIA's mainframe computer each week. It is a one-week summary representing approximately one-fourth of the herds on test, as they are tested monthly.

These data are valuable from a business management standpoint and can be used for comparing your operations to the averages from almost 1,400 herds across the state.

DHIA Averages for all herds processed between 1/30/90 and 2/06/90

|                              |        |
|------------------------------|--------|
| Number of Herds Processed    | 1,466  |
| Number of Cows Processed     | 86,046 |
| Number of Cows Per Herd      | 58.6   |
| Milk Per Cow (Lbs)           | 16,897 |
| %-Fat                        | 3.71   |
| Fat Per Cow (Lbs)            | 628    |
| %-Protein                    | 3.20   |
| Protein Per Cow (Lbs)        | 542    |
| Average Days in Milk Per Cow | 315    |
| *Value for CWT Milk(\$)      | 13.75  |
| *Value for CWT Grain(\$)     | 8.25   |
| *Value for CWT Hay(\$)       | 4.18   |

|                                       |         |
|---------------------------------------|---------|
| *Value for CWT Silage(\$)             | 1.50    |
| *Value for Pasture Per Day(\$)        | .31     |
| *Value for Milk Per Cow Per Year(\$)  | 2,324   |
| *Feed Consumed Per Cow Per Year(Lbs)  |         |
| A: Grain                              | 6,726   |
| B: Hay                                | 2,867   |
| C: Silage                             | 14,349  |
| D: Day Pasture                        | 65      |
| *Feed Cost Per Cow Per Year(\$)       |         |
| A: Grain                              | 555     |
| B: Hay                                | 120     |
| C: Silage                             | 216     |
| D: Pasture                            | 20      |
| *Total Feed Cost Per Cow Per Year(\$) | 912     |
| *Income Over Feed Costs Per Year(\$)  | 1,412   |
| *Grain to Milk Ratio                  | 1:2.5   |
| *Feed Cost Per CWT Milk(\$)           | 5.40    |
| Avg Level For 836 SCC Herds           | 352,820 |
| *Member generated figures             |         |

## BST Question: To Use Or Not To Use

BY SHARON B. SCHUSTER  
Maryland Correspondent

WESTMINSTER, Md. — Bovine Somatotrophin. "We're going on the assumption that it is going to be approved," said Dr. Robert A. Patton as a preface to his Dairy Day presentation to more than one hundred participants. Product development Specialist for the Monsanto Agricultural Company, Patton explained how the hormone cloned by the company works to benefit producers.

Bovine Somatotrophin (BST) is a naturally occurring hormone in cows. The BST clone produced by Monsanto binds to receptors such as are found in the liver. When BST is introduced, there is increased blood flow to the udder. Increased blood flow means more nutrients, "thus more milk," explained Patton.

A common misunderstanding or fear of the use of BST is that the milk contains BST. Patton explained that there are no receptors for the hormone in the udder,



Dr. Robert Patton

therefore it can not infiltrate the product. "About one to two percent of consumers will not drink milk from BST treated cows," added Patton. "People are afraid of new technology." Patton reported that BST was not

excreted in milk in trial doses. "BST is not bioactive in humans, even when injected, and it is not absorbed from the digestive tract," he explained.

Patton outlined characteristics and considerations associated with BST and its use:

- \* Approximately 95 percent will respond to BST. "If cows' receptors are already full (with the naturally occurring hormone), then it won't work. They are already producing at maximum levels."

- \* Three-time herds respond the same as herds milked twice per day.

- \* There is no genetic component. There will be an increase in production of "from eight to twelve pounds of milk per cow, no matter what." Patton reported an average of ten pounds increased production per cow whether she is a grade milker or a top of the line producing showgirl.

- \* Time of treatment with BST should be when the cow is pregnant or in milk 100 days. "Cows

## Average Farm Feed Costs For Handy Reference

To help farmers across the state to have handy reference of commodity input costs in their feeding operations for DHIA record sheets or to develop livestock feed cost data, here's this week's average costs of various ingredients as compiled from regional reports across the state of Pennsylvania. Remember these are averages so you will need to adjust your figures up or down according to your location and the quality of your crop.

|                 |          |
|-----------------|----------|
| Corn, No. 2y    | - 2.77   |
| Wheat, No. 2    | - 3.84   |
| Barley, No. 3   | - 2.13   |
| Oats, No. 2     | - 1.71   |
| Soybeans, No. 1 | - 5.40   |
| New Ear Corn,   | - 75.93  |
| Alfalfa Hay     | - 129.00 |
| Mixed Hay       | - 105.00 |
| Timothy Hay     | - 101.00 |

## New Dairy Cattle Selection System Coming

COLUMBUS, Ohio — National DHIA officials recently said that considerable progress has been made towards the adoption of unified type evaluation procedures across the U.S. dairy industry.

The Council on Dairy Cattle Breeding issued a positive report to date with the industry's cooperation in moving to a 50-point scale and adoption of the 15 primary traits.

At its December meeting, the council agreed on the desirability of a uniform animal identification system applicable for all dairy cattle in the U.S., including the need for electronic identification capabilities. A uniform numbering system has been proposed by the Holstein Association. The DHIA System uses six different numbering systems. Concerns were expressed about changing identification when a registration certificate is cancelled.

The council's task force on implementation of uniform identification met in September and the results of that meeting were discussed. It was agreed that the dairy industry needs to support some identification system so that further progress can be made. Officials anticipated that a decision will be made on a uniform animal identification system sometime in 1990.

The status of the NCDHIP Standards Task Force and of the Labor Efficient Records program

was also discussed. These projects have shown how NCDHIP can be innovative in dealing with members' needs. The average cost savings to herds joining the Labor Efficient Records program is estimated to be about 50 percent.

Opportunities for closer cooperation and mutual support among the Council's groups was another major topic.

Related issues included: a shrinking dairy cattle population; a need to be able to access new technology; new income is hard to come by for industry organizations; members are resistant to even small dues and fee increases; the Council has made progress in improving industry communications; it's time to consider some entirely new approaches, such as exploring ways to provide better service, and methods to reduce redundancy in its efforts.

A study group was designated to meet in early 1990 to develop a plan for closer mutual support and make more efficient use of each group's resources.

The council is comprised of representatives from National DHIA, Purebred Dairy Cattle Association, National Association of Animal Breeders, and the Holstein Association. The group meets semi-annually to maintain communication among these four industry groups associated with the National Cooperative Dairy Herd Improvement Program.

are open about one heat cycle longer if you start to treat them before they are pregnant."

- \* High somatic cell herds respond only half as well. "You must clean up the mastitis problem."

- \* Cows with a body condition score (BCS) of at least 2 have a good response to BST. "With a BCS of less than 2, the response is variable."

- \* Cows on BST are generally in good body condition because they eat more. "Initially they mobilize body fat and thin out for the first few weeks, then they regulate themselves."

- \* Dry matter intake (DMI) is most critical to BST response. "The higher the energy density in a ration, the better output - to a point. Ration must be balanced to

the optimum not the maximum. It's a good idea to feed one pound of fat per head per day. Cow condition will be excellent as long as the DMI is there."

Patton further explained that "it takes about one minute per cow per month" to administer BST. The product is injected twice per month and will probably be available through veterinarians to account for needle usage. "The FDA will never let us go to market unless we can account for needles because of the medical waste concerns."

Sometime, Monsanto's trade name for BST, will probably be priced at fifty cents per cow per day. Patton projects a 50 to 75 cents per day profit with its use. "BST will be dirt cheap by the time it's all over," he added.