

# A History And Perspective Of The Pennsylvania DHIA Program

(Continued from Page A1)

## Section 2

### Cow Testing Associations, The Early History and Development

In 1905 Helmer Rabild, a Danish immigrant, was an inspector for the Michigan Dairy and Food Commission. He organized a meeting of dairymen to discuss the formation of a cow testing association. In 1906, as a result of his plan, 31 herds with 239 cows made up the first cow testing association in the United States. In 1908 Rabild joined the USDA, Division of Dairying, to develop and extend organized cow testing on a nationwide basis. Maine and New York started associations in 1908, Vermont, Iowa, California, Wisconsin and Nebraska in 1909, and by 1929 all states had cow testing associations.

Pennsylvania began organizing in 1910 when a group of 20 dairymen in Chester County started the Brandywine testing association. In 1913 Bradford County organized, in 1914 Washington County, and in 1915 Lycoming, Susquehanna, Warren, Allegheny, Mercer, and Cumberland Counties. In some counties where cow numbers were not as great, milk testing clubs of six or eight dairymen were formed. They weighed the milk, kept daily records, and once each month took a sample from each cow to a Farm Bureau office or other designated location and had it tested for fat content.

In 1914 the Smith-Lever Act established Cooperative Extension. County Agents, State Extension Specialists, Federal Extension, along with interested dairymen gave the records program local control and national exposure, as well as increased stability and uniformity. In 1924 the Dairy Records Committee of American Dairy Science Association (ADSA) stimulated active interest in formulating rules and procedures to promote greater uniformity and effectiveness of testing throughout the United States. In 1925 a set of uniform rules for cow testing was adopted by ADSA. In 1926 it was recognized that the name Cow Testing Association did not adequately define the full function of the organization. ADSA suggested the name of Dairy Herd Improvement Association (DHIA), which was officially adopted in 1927. At the same time the

committee urged that employees be referred to as DHIA Supervisors rather than cow testers.

From 1910 to 1920 many counties in Pennsylvania formed cow testing clubs and associations. Early Dairy Specialists E. B. Fitts and Roscoe Welch, along with County Agents, were involved in promoting production testing, and their efforts and results are documented in the County Extension Annual Reports from that period. In 1921 Penn State intensified its effort to build a stronger educational program by hiring a full-time person to summarize production and feed records of dairymen whose herds were on test.

Iver Oleson Sidelmann, a Danish immigrant schooled at the Royal Agricultural College in Copenhagen, had worked at developing cow testing programs in Denmark. He saw an announcement in the paper for a person to go to Poland to organize and conduct dairy testing. He left college and went to Poland, and from there he moved on to Russia, Finland, Sweden, England, Scotland, Iceland, and Holland. He had, by this time, become involved in marketing dairy cattle. World War I effectively shut down his marketing business, and he came to the United States hoping to carry on his enterprise. The advent of Hoof and Mouth disease in Europe destroyed his import business plans, and he rekindled his first interest in dairy testing. While at Penn State he remained involved at the international level as an interpreter for the World's Dairy Congress. He spoke 9 different languages and dialects. From 1921 until his retirement in 1946, his sole responsibility was to summarize production records. He traced Pennsylvania records back to the year 1910, which provided a yearly summary of DHIA since its beginning.

In 1923 Charles Gearhart became the first Extension Dairy Specialist in PA to devote full time to an educational program utilizing records from DHIA. He assisted County Agents and dairymen in organizing and managing new associations. Gearhart was very personable and a master educator, and his presence at Penn State brought a burst of energy and direction to the DHIA program. His appointment coincided with the 1924 efforts by ADSA and the National Dairy Records Committee to give more visibility to the value of records as a management tool for dairymen.

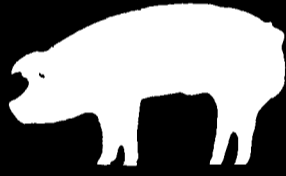
## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section 1	Introduction
Section 2	Cow Testing Associations, The Early History and Development
Section 3	The Structuring of DHIA in Pennsylvania
Section 4	County Agents, Dairy Extension, and DHIA
Section 5	Penn State University and DHIA
Section 6	Artificial Breeding Cooperatives and DHIA
Section 7	The Pennsylvania Dairymen Association and DHIA
Section 8	ADSA, USDA, and DHIA
Section 9	The DHIA Supervisor
Section 10	Selected Highlights from Minutes of State DHIA
Section 11	Summary of Highlights and Dates of DHIA Activity
Section 12	Past Presidents of State DHIA 35
Section 13	PA Dairymen serving as President NDHIA
Section 14	DHIA General Managers
Section 15	State Management Districts/Areas for Fieldmen
Section 16	Summary Comments

The goal of producing accurate production records and feed data was very important to DHIA. The success of this effort depended largely on the DHIA Supervisors. Finding supervisors was a problem, and retaining them an even larger problem. To solve these problems Gearhart started a two week shortcourse at Penn State. Supervisors were taught how to weigh and sample milk, run the Babcock Test, keep the herd books, and they learned the rules and regulations affecting records and herd tests. Upon successfully completing the shortcourse, the student was given a certificate of approval to conduct a testing program.

Six shortcourses were held each year, over a period of many years. Up to 30 supervisors would attend each shortcourse. A list of homes in State College with rooms to rent was provided to each student. Room,

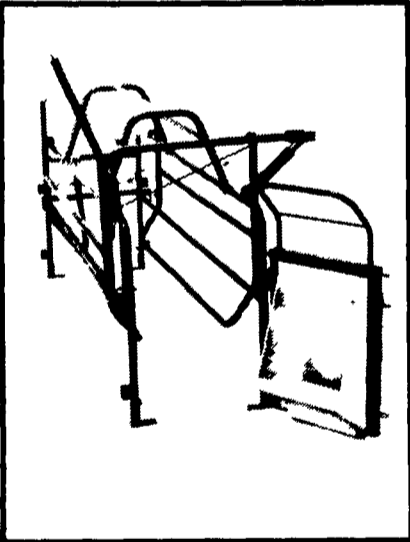
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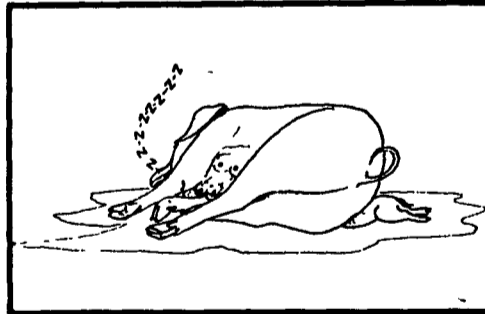
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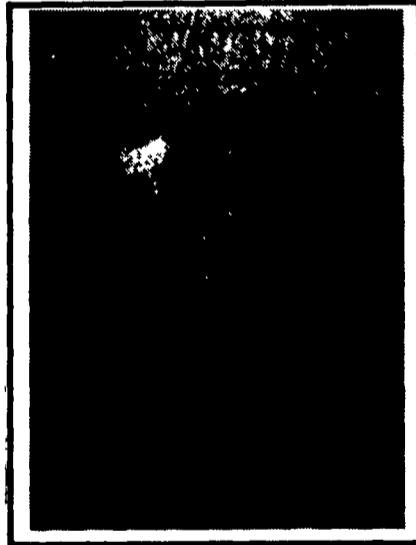


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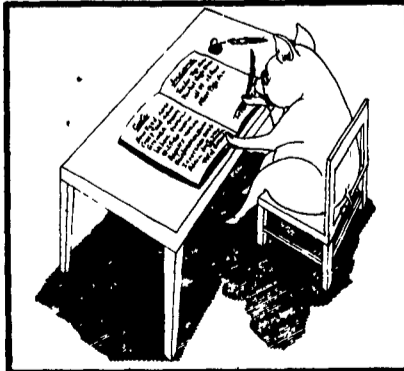


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