

Program Highlights Dairy Cow

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He said that although some farmers have expressed concern about settling a high producing cow, he said that research, which looked a large numbers of cows over a wide range of conditions showed that, "You shouldn't see a big difference in conception between high producing and low producing cows."

To those who consider the effects of delaying insemination in an attempt to improve conception rate, he said that in-depth studies have shown at best a 2 percent gain in rate of conception.

"In reality, there should be little difference between insemination at 50 days and 120 days. There's no good reason to delay breeding high producing cows early."

Further, Furgeson's talk reinforced what other experts have been expressing recently: increasing dry cow care and nutrition. He said that body condition scoring is one of the best indicators of the energy balance of the cow. The problem with high producing cows

not reproducing is that those cows in a negative energy balance will not have as great a conception rate as those in a positive or neutral energy balance.

Usable indicators of energy balance is body score. He said that the average cow, if fed right, should be out of a negative energy balance after the first eight weeks of lactation.

He said that at the fourth week of lactation, the cow should have lost the most body condition.

In appearance, body condition should be stable between four weeks and 13 weeks. At 13 weeks the body condition should show an increase, but that a positive energy balance should have begun after eight weeks and she should be ready for conception prior to 13 weeks.

A generally reliable rule of thumb for condition of the cow, Furgeson said, is, "If you put your hand on the pin bone and don't feel a fat pad, she's too thin. She's too fat if you can't see the ligament (in the rear support)."

Gerald

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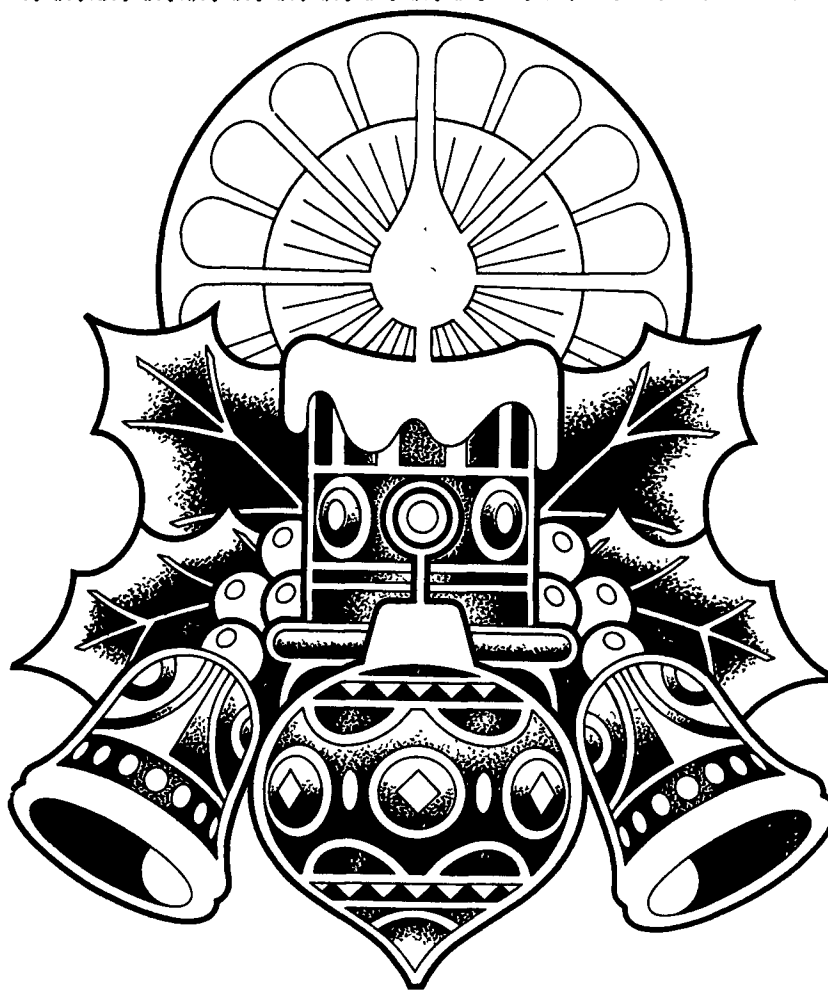
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