

Delaware, Mid-East Merge

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mining factor in where dairy herd owners can go to receive service. For example, dairy herds in Vermont are having their dairy herd records processed in North Carolina.

Dukas said that the word "dynamic" is accurate in describing the ongoing changes in the U.S. dairy industry's use of record keeping and processing services.

The range of change goes from state-to-state mergers, subgroups, within larger groups switching alliances, to individuals seeking alternative services for their specific herds.

Among some of the factors being considered in assessing current DHIA service carriers, and potential new carriers, are technician availability, reliability, dependability, type of services provided, and cost.

Delaware Merges

One of the most recent mergers

occurred this week when Delaware DHIA yesterday officially merged with Mid-East DHIA, based in Columbus, Ohio.

The members of the Delaware DHIA last week approved a merger with the Mid-East DHIA, that was effective as of April 1.

Mid-East DHIA is the association covering producers in Maryland and West Virginia, in addition to Ohio and some Midwestern states. George Grambling, general manager of Mid-East was not available for comment this past week, according to an office receptionist, because he was attending meetings.

However, Dr. George Haenlein, a well-known dairy expert with the University of Delaware Extension Service, who has also served in support of the Delaware DHIA, said that he sees the move as being beneficial to the Delaware membership in the long run.

Haenlein, as an Extension spe-

cialist, is to continue his involvement with Delaware DHIA by serving as an ex officio with Mid-East board of directors.

According to Haenlein, the 38 herds with Delaware DHIA were never a real affiliate to begin with, having processing done through Cornell University with Northeast DHIA. But under that arrangement, Delaware was an autonomous organization.

Under the merger, Mid-East has changed also. It now is comprised of 10 subunits with one representative each on the Mid-East Board of Directors.

But Delaware hasn't forfeited all of its self-governing powers. They are retaining their own board of directors.

According to a written report from Haenlein, "To give up our sovereignty did not come easy. We had many soul searching meetings and discussion of the benefits and consequences.

"In the final analysis, we were convinced that the prospects of

fulltime management of our affairs by Mid-East, which we were no longer able to provide under the new National DHIA rules, were in the best interest of Delaware DHIA.

"We will continue to have our records processed by Cornell Computing Center and our records will be officially certified under the Mid-East program."

Mid-East is to take over responsibility for supervisor training, retraining, insurance, national dues, conversion to electronics, evaluations, and accuracy verifications, according to Haenlein.

"We will have to pay to Mid-East 28 cents per-cow extra, per-month, but by saving other current secretarial costs in our budget, we have calculated that this merger will cost us only 10 cents per-cow, per-month extra.

"Any extra cost is a very undesirable burden, but it seems that under the present circumstances, we had no other choice and in the long run, we will be glad that we made this move."

During a telephone interview Thursday, Haenlein said the rea-

son for the merger was not that the number of cows on test in Delaware was falling. Just the opposite, but the number of animals never was strong enough to justify paying for complete independent status.

He also said that the merger will not affect the necessity of extension service. He said that University of Delaware has always maintained a good relationship with Maryland, and Virginia, and he said he expects that cooperation to continue.

The merger was not a surprise for its members, according to Haenlein. "The Delaware DHIA board looked into the cost figures in four separate directors' meetings and public meetings to make sure everybody understood what the costs would be and what costs were reasonable."

Whether or not the individual dairyman receives his value for the price of paying for accurate, reliable records isn't something that any organization can ensure,

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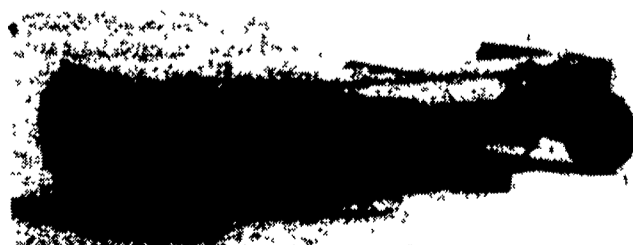
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