

FOCUS

A NEWSLETTER FOR MEMBERS & CUSTOMERS



Dixie L. Burris, Membership Development
Call 1-800-DHI-TEST For Information
Pennsylvania Dairy Herd Improvement Association
DHIA Service Center
Orchard Road, University Park, PA 16802

Lancaster Farming, Pages D2 To D4

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Extension Corner

Cows, Numbers And Identification

LARRY W. SPECHT
Professor of Dairy Science

Currently there are about 9.6 million dairy cows in the U.S. How many of them contribute to the genetic improvement of our national dairy herd? DHIA records show that about 4.8 million cows are on a production testing program but only 3.5 million are in programs that will qualify their records to be utilized by breed and AI sponsored progeny test programs.

Records used by the USDA-AIPL cow and sire evaluation programs must be sire identified. Roughly 65 percent of the production records have sire information. This brings the number of usable records down to 2.3 million. A large majority of the cows on test (possibly 90%) are Holsteins. Ninety percent of 2.3 million equals 2 million Holsteins with useable production data. With such a large number of animals it only takes a portion of them to run an adequate young sire testing program. Twenty percent of the cows bred to progeny test bulls will provide good genetic programs for the Holstein breed. This would require that 400,000 cows be bred to young bulls. If each young sire breeds 500 cows we expect 50 to 60 tested and identified daughters, enough to get a good idea as to the genetic merit of the sire. This plan would enable us to test about 800 sires per year through organized sampling programs. Actually, the U.S. breeding industry is currently testing almost twice that number each year. Similar procedures for the other breeds would allow the testing of about 50 Jersey males, and from 10 to 12 bulls for the Guernsey, Ayrshire, and Brown Swiss breeds. Such figures are reasonably close to what the breed sponsored groups and A.I. units are presently doing. These numbers do not include bulls under test by individuals and private breeder groups.

We can conclude that 400 to 450 thousand tested cows will provide the daughter information needed to carry out the progeny test plan for the dairy breeds under today's circumstances. The pro-

duction and physical traits of the daughters will tell us which sires are the best and should be used to produce the next generation of dairy cattle.

There is another group of females that is of even greater importance. It's the animals needed as dams of the next generation of bulls. The primary requirements in a bull dam are (1) in top 1 to 3 percent of the breed for her genetic value and (2) a reasonable classification score (82-85 points for young cows). Currently, registration in the breed herdbook is almost always a requirement.

There are about 800,000 registered Holsteins on the DHIR, DHI and AM/PM test plans. The top 1 percent of the breed are designated as "Elite" cows. Lists of the 8,000 plus animals are made available to breeders and AI units. Inquiries are made to the owners of the "Elite" cows asking if the animal(s) are (1) alive and reproductively sound, (2) have a reasonable classification score and (3) would be available for a contract mating to a top sire. The intent of the contract is to produce one or more

sons by a specific sire mutually agreeable to the owner of the cow and the breeding unit. In some cases herdowners may get a number of inquiries on a single animal. It is estimated that about half of the 8,000 elite animals will meet the above qualifications. Since the industry follows the same routine every six months, many of the current animals were previously on the elite list. About 1,000 new animals appear each time and there is intense competition within the breeding industry to contract—mate the new ones.

Not every female that is contracted will produce a healthy male calf even with the extensive use of the embryo transfer technique. It is estimated that 75 to 80 percent of all contract cows undergo the embryo transfer procedure. For every 100 cows that are planned there will likely be 70-75 bulls born. Some death loss occurs and about 20 percent of the young bulls fail to pass the standard health tests required by all breeding units. Since such losses must

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District Directors' Meetings Planned

The district meetings for local DHIA directors are planned for January and February, 1995. There are meetings scheduled around the state, corresponding to the 18 director districts. These meetings are held every year primarily for the directors of local DHIA committees/boards. It is an opportunity for directors and management to get together for discussion of issues and developments affecting DHIA members statewide. Election of directors to the State Board is also done at the meetings. Anyone interested in attending the meeting in their district may contact their county committee or local board. The meeting will begin at 9:30 A.M. and end after lunch.

District 1	Bonanza Restaurant, Franklin	Jan 31, 1995
District 2	Bonanza Restaurant, Franklin	Jan 31, 1995
District 3	Hoss's, Greensburg	Jan 30, 1995
District 4	Oxyok Inn, Route 6	Jan 25, 1995
District 5	Best Way Restaurant, Milesburg	Feb 3, 1995
District 6	Hoss's Greensburg	Jan 30, 1995
District 7	Happy Hollow Restaurant, Saxton	Feb 2, 1995
District 8	Happy Hollow Restaurant, Saxton	Feb 2, 1995
District 9	Crosskeys Restaurant, Route 94/30	Jan 24, 1995
District 10	Crosskeys Restaurant, Route 94/30	Jan 24, 1995
District 11	Family House Restaurant, Mifflintown	Jan 27, 1995
District 12	Family House Restaurant, Mifflintown	Jan 27, 1995
District 13	Bonanza, Wysox	Feb 1, 1995
District 14	Bonanza, Wysox	Feb 1, 1995
District 15	Lebanon County Extension Ofc., Lebanon	Jan 23, 1995
District 16	Bonanza, Wysox	Feb 1, 1995
District 17	Lebanon County Extension Ofc., Lebanon	Jan 23, 1995
District 18	Hoss's Restaurant, Lionville	Jan 26, 1995

Notes From the Pa. DHIA Board Minutes

DAVE SLUSSER
General Manager

This year has been a very active and challenging year for the PA DHIA Board of Directors. The year started out with the hiring of a new General Manager, Dave Slusser, at the January 4th Board Meeting. Many changes were made by the Board and Management during the year to make the Cooperative more efficient and competitive for the times. The following is a brief summary of actions taken by the Board, and the management decisions announced at Board Meetings.

Feb. 17 - A lawsuit was filed against PA DHIA as well as Northeast, Vermont, Ohio and National. DHIA's The suit concerned anti-trust activities conducted jointly and individually against a private dairy records provider by the above named associates. PA filed a motion to dismiss the charges and prospects so far look very good for favorable

actions in court toward PA DHIA.

Mergers were approved by the Board for Erie, and Susquehanna counties, and a conditional merger was approved for Bradford County.

April 26, 27 - The Board instructed management to complete a program necessary to track accounts receivable, and billing, and give the project top priority.

Management was to develop a more uniform system of billing the membership for the next budget.

A conditional merger was approved for Chester County.

The 1995 Annual Meeting date was set for March 10, 1995 in State college. In order to cut expenses, a one day annual meeting is planned starting with an Awards breakfast, followed by the business meeting. The meeting is set for the afternoon, and will not be a banquet.

Dixie Burris was named Laboratory Manager as well as Director of Member Services. Management announced the closing of the



Dave Slusser

downtown office, and the conversion of the Lab employees from University employees to PA DHIA employees.

The Board endorsed the Resolution posted by the membership at the State Annual Meeting to

change the feeding program to be more compatible with modern feeding systems on the farm.

Westfalia's Dairy Plan will be purchased from the Technicians Lap Top and marketed by PA DHIA.

New Officers elected by the Board are as follows:

President - Frank Orner

Vice-President - William Jackson

Secretary - Lane Sollenberger

Treasurer - Norman Hershey

Board representative on the Employee Retirement Fund - Neal McCulloch

Jun. 28, 29 - A marketing seminar was conducted for Senior Technicians, Regional Managers, and State Staff.

44 out of State Herds transferred to PA DHIA, and 9 Herds transferred out of State.

Sept. 29, 30 - Ted Brown was introduced to the Board as new Director of Finances and Personnel.

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