

Changing World For Holstein Breeders

(Continued from Page A1)
members.

Some of the issues during the day-long forum ranged from the continuing challenge of identification of registered animals to calling for a return to annotating on pedigrees that a sire was rated as a Gold Medal sire in his day.

The open forums are held annually prior to the national convention so that directors, delegates and members can begin the process of building consensus on issues that affect the industry.

For the purpose of facilitating discussions, attendees are given a booklet with a suggested agenda, though groups are invited to create their own agenda, according to what other issues and information members consider to be important.

The issues in the booklet were animal identification, goals of field representatives and how they should coordinate promotional efforts, a review of association finances and expenditures, several proposed bylaws changes, changes in the rules of the National Dairy Herd Improvement Association, changes in the herd's Redbook, semen from foreign-owned bulls and registration of offspring, an upcoming pilot program (A-Value Program) that is to give cow family traits some comparative values, the existing herd classification programs and average scores since switching from a four-category rating system to a five-category system, among some other topics for review.

When the convention business meetings get underway, some of these issues are expected to be voted upon, while others are expected to receive more attention and discussion.

Overall, according to discussion Thursday, the association is apparently doing well financially, although there has been some delay in getting a new main computer installed. The old mainframe

computer has been used long past its practical expectations, and will probably not provide any resale value.

Members generally agreed that the gist of rules changes proposed by National DHIA — which is to put the onus of determining the accuracy of individual producer records on the user of those records, instead of DHIA — will work, and that, while more discussion is necessary, breeders ought to be allowed to be more flexible in testing procedures.

The buyer-beware thinking also seemed to continue into discussions of whether or not the association should support a five-year wait before changing the predicted transmitting abilities of sires based on new daughter information.

According to statements from several in attendance, most of the world's breeding organizations use a five-year interval before recalculating the values. Canada and some others use an annual updating method, called a rolling base, which changes the values annually.

It was said Thursday that prior to the 1980s, a rolling base was used, but breeders complained about losing value on a heifer calf even before she was born because the rating of the sire decreased after 12 months.

Though not demonstrating a strong commitment to either, those attending the Harrisburg forum seemed to consider that both types of base reporting requires more educational efforts to members.

Steve Berland, Holstein Association's director of type evaluations, presented a review of the different breakdown system for classifying animals.

As a result of a survey that was done about client satisfaction with the new classification system, Berland said that the majority of people surveyed understood the new program (56 percent), while 31

percent said they didn't understand it very well.

While the percentages that Berland reported, using cells and an overhead projector, differed slightly from those included in the forum topic guide, they were within a few points of each other.

The survey further showed that 69 percent found their classifier helpful in explaining the new system, and that most people found information material distributed by Holstein Association USA Inc. helpful, while the majority thought the new system beneficial to them as breeders.

What the change has attempted to do is to remove more subjectivity in classification and eliminate some of the "unwanted" ratings. Previously there were a seemingly

incongruously large number of 85-point cattle, compared to 84-points, and a lot of 90s compared to 89s.

According to Berland, the new system using five number-valued trait categories has helped arrive at better scores because the classifier doesn't know what the final score will be until he enters the final category score.

Berland also showed a series of charts of average scores of cattle classified and it seemed to reflect dairy breeder selection trends, he said.

A number of other items were discussed, such as the possible positive aspects of "set" classifying versus official classifications. Set classifying refers to the prac-

tice of an artificial insemination group paying to have classifications done of daughters of its young sire program.

Some said that some commercial dairymen and breeders may think that classifying only through the set-system may be enough for his herd, and it may discourage them from participation in official classification, while others said that classifying through the set-system gives the Holstein Association an opportunity to promote the organization and its benefits face-to-face.

For more information on some of the issues to come up at the convention, contact a local Holstein association club member, the state association, or the national association.

Dairyalea To Sponsor Young Farmer Seminar

SYRACUSE, N.Y. — Recognizing that today's young farmers will provide the dairy industry with direction and leadership well into the next century, Dairyalea Cooperative Inc. is sponsoring an informational seminar for members ages 20-40.

On Feb. 25 and 26, more than 100 Dairyalea young farmers will gather at the Holiday Inn in Syracuse, N.Y., to hear about issues pertinent to farm operations and the dairy industry. Breakout sessions will be held on herd health and comfort, manure/nutrient management, and family farm transition.

"Knowledge is a key factor in building leadership. Dairyalea is committed to keeping our young members up to date on farming and industry matters," said Mark

Kenville, Dairyalea Director of member relations and communications. "There also is immense benefit in bringing together young farmers who have similar experiences, challenges and goals. Through interaction, many participants return home from our seminar with new approaches and ideas for their farm operations."

A highlight of the two-day annual seminar will be a choice of tours for the Young Farmers to attend. These tours will include the New York State Farm Show in Syracuse, N.Y.; the H.P. Hood Manufacturing Plant in Oneida, N.Y.; and Oakwood Dairy, a large, modern farm operation in Auburn, N.Y.

The seminar also will include guest speaker Judy Gifford of the

National Milk Producers Federation, who will inform the participants on "New Developments in Washington."

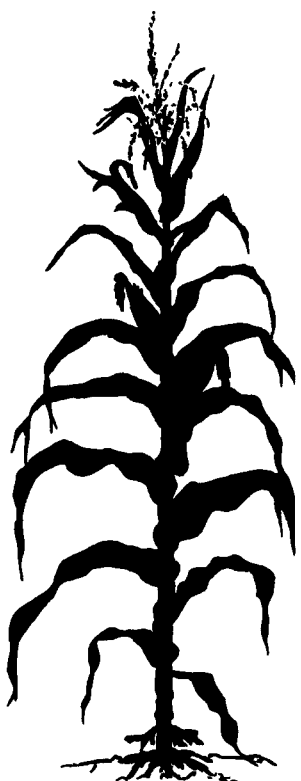
In addition, the Young Farmers will hear from Dairyalea Chief Executive Officer Rick Smith, who will address the Cooperative's progress and its outlook for the future, while a Dairyalea and industry update will be given by Dairyalea President Clyde Rutherford.

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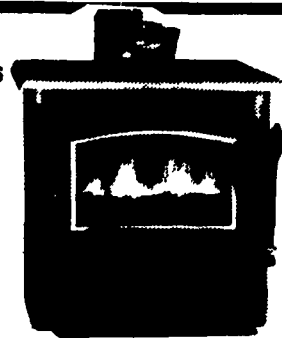
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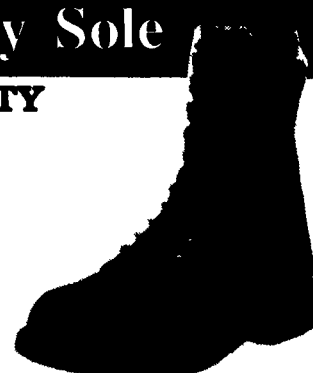
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