

International Sales Of Semen Growing, Domestic Slips

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LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.) — The sale of dairy cattle semen produced in the United States has been growing internationally; while domestic sales have been stagnant, a reflection of decreasing numbers of domestic dairy cattle, according to Dr. Gordon Doak, president of the National Association of Animal Breeders and Certified Semen Services.

Doak was the featured speaker at the 31st annual meeting of the Atlantic Breeders Cooperative, held Wednesday at the Eden Resort Inn, in Lancaster.

The cooperative meeting included a business meeting, as well as reports from different officers in the cooperative. The meeting also served as an orientation for the cooperative's elected directors and representatives to the

resource/promotion committee. In Doak's presentation to the group — his second public speaking engagement before a member organization since 1976, and both times at Atlantic's annual meeting — he outlined the trends in the dairy industry toward fewer farms, fewer cows with higher milk production, and the associated decrease in the need for semen.

At the same time, the costs of producing semen have increased.

A trend that has served to keep economic balance within the artificial insemination industry has been the increased sales of semen internationally.

According to Doak, since 1985, export sales have tripled, while domestic sales have decreased by almost 10 percent.

He showed a graph that extended the trends past the year

2000, indicating that eventually, sales of exported semen could become more financially important than domestic sales, although Doak said he didn't believe it would continue that far.

The point he was trying to make was that the U.S. artificial insemination industry is going to have to start working on developing types of cattle semen tailored to the needs of non-domestic buyers.

In effect, he said that the U.S. industry can't afford to treat international sales of semen as a beneficial sideline business that will continue without regard.

He said those markets must be understood and products developed to compete with the increase in semen production in those other nations.

Further, he said that he didn't think that — given that much of the dairy genetics coming from other nations are basically derived from genetic programs developed here — that the price of imported semen should naturally not be able to undersell domestic semen.

He also said the beef cattle and swine semen sales are increasing and will provide opportunities for increased sales.

In other business, Harry Roth, general manager of the cooperative, gave an overview of the cooperative's favorable business position, which also reflects the larger trend in semen sales of less member sales and increased income from non-member and export sales.

He also reviewed the proposed merger with two other artificial insemination cooperatives under



Dr. Gordon Doak, president of the National Association of Animal Breeders, is guest speaker at the annual Atlantic Breeders Cooperative annual banquet meeting.

the Federated Genetics, and the question that he said faces the cooperatives: "Can we somehow continue to accelerate our genetic progress through progeny testing and yet contain overhead cost?"

The answers, he said, may lie in two possibilities. He said that tech-

nological breakthroughs in selection methods of young sires (perhaps through genetic testing for known genes); and networking with other A.I. cooperatives as far as progeny testing may help achieve that a "yes" answer to that question.

February Milk Production Up

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.)—Milk production in Pennsylvania during February 1995 totaled 820 million pounds, 4 percent above last year's production, according to the Pennsylvania Agricultural Statistics Service (PASS).

The number of milk cows in the state during the month averaged 641,000 head, up 2,000 from January, and 4,000 more than February 1994.

Production per cow averaged 1,280 pounds in February, 110

pounds less than January's production per cow of 1,390 pounds, but 40 pounds more than February 1994.

Milk production in the 22 states surveyed during February 1995 totaled 10.4 billion pounds, up 4 percent compared to production during February 1994.

The number of milk cows averaged 8.09 million head, up 7,000 head from a year earlier. Production per cow averaged 1,287 pounds, 51 pounds more than February of last year.

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