

Restructured Holstein Herdbook

BRATTLEBORO, Vt. — Alan Koepke can remember a time when he had a high cull rate, low merchandising figures and low classification scores on his dairy farm. But a new era, since 1989, has brought lower culling, increased income, and improved type traits.

The difference, he said he believes, comes from Officially Identified Holsteins and programs offered by the Holstein Association.

With the Holstein Association's newly structured herdbook, approved by delegates at their annual meeting in June, many commercial dairy producers will be able to see the same returns on investment that Koepke has. That's because all Holsteins are now eligible to be registered in the herdbook. USDA research in 1996 showed that Registered Holsteins return \$242 more during their lifetime than unidentified Holsteins, based on increased milk production and longer herd life.

Koepke said he estimates that with classification and identification, he's invested \$3,500. Returns, however, have been approximately \$35,000. "That's why we bother with the Registered Holsteins," he said, "and we're not talking about some elite ones coming through the system. Any commercial person that wants to be in the business for several years can benefit from the Holstein Association's programs."

"In the first era, we were shipping 28 percent to the stockyard, and breeding sales only made up 9 percent of income," the Oconomowoc, Wis., producer said. "And those basically came off the bottom of the herd." The cull rate is now down to 21 percent. Sales of breeding stock have increased to 24 percent. And the income over the last few years has increased dramatically. The milking herd has remained at 240 cows since 1989.

Identification was not a high priority when Alan started farming in 1963. "We were in the business of selling milk," he said. "But then identification became a priority — we had always used DHI and when the Identified Holstein Female (IHF) program became

available from the Holstein Association we started using that too." Having IHFs and Qualified Holsteins paid off, he said. "We now get a couple hundred dollars more than we were originally," he said. "It's well above feed costs and another way to merchandise genetics. It all adds up."

Each animal in the Holstein Association's newly restructured herdbook will have calculated, recorded and reported a percentage "Registered Holstein Ancestry" or "RHA." This percentage will be calculated by averaging the percent RHA of the parents and then rounding down to the nearest whole number.

Regular registration fees are the same as for the previous Registered and Qualified programs. These are based on the animal's age and membership status of the applicant. Animals whose ancestors are currently recorded in the herdbook are subject to these fees.

As an incentive for those interested in registering their grade Holsteins, there is a special start-up pricing program. With start-up pricing, a producer can submit applications on one or several generations for a fee of \$6 each.

For example, a producer could apply to register a calf, her dam and granddam. These animals, if all are out of 100 percent RHA sires, would be 87 percent RHA, 75 percent RHA and 50 percent RHA respectively. The calf, at 87 percent RHA, would be eligible for all Holstein Association programs.

Koepke has sold both Registered and Qualified bulls to local producers and to bull sales. Buyers want to know they are buying quality animals and are interested in the pedigree as well, he added.

"I think of Official Identification as another part of enterprising," he said. "It takes more time to market, communicate, go to meetings, but it's a long-term investment. After all, it takes two to three generations, to see improvement."

For more information about the Holstein Association's herdbook, call the Member Services Unit at 1-800-952-5200.

New Holland Sales Stables Holds Dairy Show, Sale

NEW HOLLAND (Lancaster Co.) — Stonehurst Farm of Strasburg last week showed the grand champion of the annual New Holland Sales Stables Dairy Show and Sale.

The annual show of 2-year-old and older dairy cattle was judged by Norman Hill of Woodbine Maryland, and has been a long-time event of the sales stables.

After the show, the animals are then sold at auction. The sale totalled \$51,275 on 35 animals. Excluding the two champions, it averaged \$1,356.82 on 33 animals.

Larry Charles purchased the champion cow for \$3,800.

James Hostetter of Annville showed the reserve grand champion, a 3-year-old fresh cow, which was purchased \$2,700 by the Peila Brothers.

The show offers eight categories — mixed breed dry cow and mixed breed fresh cow; 2-year-old dry Holstein, 2-year-old fresh Holstein, 3-year-old dry, 3-year-old fresh, and mature dry and mature fresh.

While the grand and reserve grand champions respectively brought the two highest prices, Larry Charles also purchased the first place 2-year-old dry cow for \$2,600, and the third place dry 2-year-old for \$2,000. Julia Stover purchased the second-place dry 3-year-old from Fred Potteiger for \$2,000.

NEW HOLLAND SALES STABLES 1997 Dairy Show & Sale

MIXED BREED, DRY: 1.Walter Risser; 2.Fred Potteiger.
MIXED BREED, FRESH: 1.James Hostetter; 2.Walter Risser; 3.Dennis Kolb.
2-YR-OLD, DRY: 1.Stonehurst Farm; 2.Fred Potteiger; 3.Stonehurst Farm.
2-YR-OLD, FRESH: 1.Sandy Thomas; 2.Walter Risser; 3.Fred Potteiger.
3-YR-OLD, DRY: 1.Fred Potteiger; 2.Fred Potteiger; 3.Marvin Eshlemans.
3-YR-OLD, FRESH: 1.James Hostetter; 2.Mel Peifer; 3.James Hostetter.
MATURE DRY COW: 1.Duane Richard; 2.Joe Kolb; 3.Fred Potteiger.
MATURE FRESH COW: 1.Stonehurst Farm; 2.Fred Potteiger; 3.Dale Hostetter.

Good Receives Honorary Award

(Continued from Page 1)

agents without ever having been one and for promoting the family unit to make and keep the home the strength of our nation.

According to Trudy Dougherty, vice president, the state honorary award is not given annually but only occasionally to a person who works toward the same ideals as the extension family living agents.

Lou Ann was cited for her feature stories on families, food and nutrition articles, and reporting on extension family living programs.

Lou Ann has been a staff writer for *Lancaster Farming* for 10 years. She and her husband Parke reside in Lititz and have four married children and four grandchildren.

Additional coverage of the awards presented to agents at the Pennsylvania Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences and the Pennsylvania Association of County Agricultural Agents will be in next week's issue.

Conservation Efforts

(Continued from Page A33)

problem with the property.

Nine years ago, the family offered and had accepted into the USDA Conservation Reserve Program 73 acres of their farm.

The bare-earth, steep fields were transformed through the planting of 38,000 tree seedlings on 56 acres; the planting of wildlife cover plants on other acres; some fields of native grasses; seven wildlife food plots (one acre planted for birds with sunflowers, one with buckwheat, others with sorghum and millet).

Fruit-and food-bearing trees, shrubs and bushes have also been planted, and family members said that the farm has become a dream come true.

For the first time in years, they are occasionally waking to the sound of a ringnecked pheasant cackling, though they noted that wild reproduction doesn't seem to have taken hold, blaming it on predation by birds and some furbear-

ers, not really certain why the birds they have stocked over the years (1,000 over eight years) seem to disappear from one year to the next.

Slide photographs taken by the family and discussed by family members noted the work that initially went in to the plantings and the cultivation of the plants (they did spray to protect the tree seedlings until they reached a size where they could compete more easily with other plants).

The growth of the different species — larch, some hardwoods, some pines, etc. — was also demonstrated with the photographs. While the family has one year to go under its current CRP contract, Althea has already sub-

mitted an application to be considered for another 10 years under the current round of the revised CRP program.

Wertz said that prior to placing the land into the USDA CRP, the erosion rate of the soil was not only considered highly erodible, but was considered three times more erodible than what would be profitable to farm.

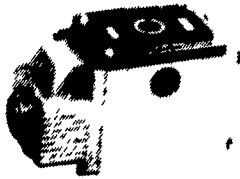
Though the profitability of the land can no longer be compared in terms of tradition crops, the family expressed the sentiment that it has become more valuable than it ever was, or could be in any other form.

For more information on the Lebanon Conservation District or its programs, call Wertz at (717) 272-3377.

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