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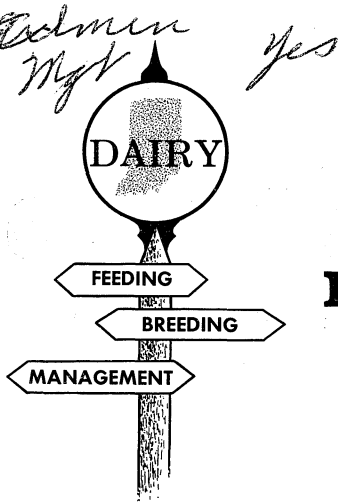
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Increase Dairy Profits through Use of Production Records

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To realize a profit from the dairy herd today, a successful dairyman cannot operate on a short-term planning basis. He must be continually raising the production levels of the herd. This can be done through a long-range breeding, feeding, and management plan based on accurate production records.

High year-to-year production pays the dairy expenses and gives the dairyman profit. Knowing only the average production of the dairy herd from the milk check at the plant is of little value, since this information does not indicate which cows are "freeloading" on the good producers in the herd.

The average production of all dairy cows in Indiana is only 9,200 pounds of milk per year, but the average cow on DHI test produces 12,350 pounds of milk, a difference of 3,150 pounds. With milk at \$5.00 per cwt., the DHI cow produces \$158.00 more gross income per year than the average cow, but requires only \$50.00 more in feed than the 9,200 pound producer. The high producer does not require any more labor, housing, and other expenses than the low producer.

Why do the herds of a DHI testing program produce more milk and make more money? Simply because these dairymen have and make use of records to do a better job of feeding, breeding, culling and management.

RECORDS AS A BASIS FOR FEEDING

It is not possible to feed the individual cow effectively without some production

record-keeping plan. For example, a dairy cow can be fed concentrates in three ways: overfed, underfed, and fed correctly according to production. If production is guessed at, then the amount of feed needed will also be a guess. When feeding concentrates, buterfat percentage needs to be known because the requirements go up with the per cent of fat in the milk. Overfeeding increases the feed bill unnecessarily and underfeeding lowers production. Recordkeeping can be used to feed more efficiently, and, in many cases, feed saving alone more than pays for record-keeping.

RECORDS AS A BASIS FOR CULLING

There is no other way to determine the production of the individual cow, and to find which are low, unprofitable producers than to keep production records.

Some dairymen who do not test their herds measure a cow's production by the amount she produces at the peak of lactation. This is worth very little, because some cows have a tendency to "drop-off" very fast after the peak and then to "dry-up" early. Such cows are unprofitable and this trait should not be tolerated. The cow that produces well from freshening to about 60 days before calving is the kind of cow with which to build a herd. Production records on each cow will reveal these "hot-shot, short-time" milkers.

Milk is sold on the basis of butterfat percentage, and there is a difference in income from cows that produce 8,000 pounds

of two per cent milk and those that produce 8,000 pounds of milk testing four per cent butterfat. There are many causes of low fat tests and the specific cause should be determined before any culling on low tests is done. The only way to pick out the low testers is to run butterfat tests.

RECORDS AS A BASIS FOR SELECTING BREEDING STOCK

Production records will aid in selection of good brood cows on which to build a good producing herd. Artificial insemination is available to any dairyman, and by using records to select bulls, every dairyman can develop as well-bred a herd as possible. Selecting or purchasing herd replacements without records is a blind venture.

After dairymen have been able to replace their low producers with potentially high producing heifers, they may have surplus heifers for sale. Buyers interested in improving their herds look for replacements from cows with well-kept records. These animals command a premium sale price and can easily pay for many years of testing.

Production records-keeping is available or can be made available to any dairyman in the state. Dairymen not interested in official records, but who want records to improve their cattle, and to do a better management job, can have an economical unofficial record.

Records can pay for themselves in a savings equivalent to one pound of grain per cow per day. If the production per cow can

be increased by 200 pounds of milk or seven pounds of butterfat per year, the record has paid for itself, and this is an increase of less than one glass of milk per cow per day.

Anyone interested in getting production records on his cows should contact either his Area Extension Agent, or his milk plant fieldman for information on how to get on test.

FACTORS INFLUENCING RETURNS FROM DAIRY HERDS

1. Daily and yearly milk and butterfat production per cow.
2. Per cent of days cows are in milk.
3. The feeding of a balanced economical grain ration according to production.
4. The type quality and quantity of forages used.
5. The amount of grain fed daily, particularly for about four weeks before calving and for the first 90 to 120 days after calving.
6. The feed costs per hundred pounds of milk produced.
7. The income above feed costs from individual cows and from the herd.
8. The pounds of milk produced per worker per hour of in-barn-labor.
9. The size and age of heifers when they calve the first time and their years of production.
10. Leucocyte count of milk.
11. The investment you have in buildings and equipment on a per cow basis.
12. The market and price you receive for milk and surplus or breeding stock.