

# The Dairy Herd Improvement Program

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but upon the use made of them.

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## A SUCCESSFUL DAIRY HERD IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

The organization of a cow testing association and the keeping of production records do not make a complete dairy herd improvement program. The cow testing association and the production records it provides furnish the foundation for an excellent dairy herd improvement program. Such a program provides for the fullest use of the organization and the production records in the individual herds.

Everyone connected with the cow testing association is involved in this program—the county agent, the tester, the cow testing association officers, and the members.

**The county agent**, as head of the extension work in the county, has definite responsibilities regarding not only organization but the development and carrying out of the herd improvement projects. He serves as the link connecting the association with the Extension Division, the Dairy Division, and the Experiment Station. He helps to develop the program of work with the tester and the cow testing association officers as a part of his county dairy extension program. He secures the necessary assistance from the University Farm. The county agent supervises the activities of the tester and advises him in his work. He supervises the reports, has them typed, and maintains a complete file of association activities in his office. He supervises the preparation of news notes and sees that they are sent in regularly to the local papers.

**The tester** is the active member of the group who devotes his complete time to the welfare of the association. He not only does his testing properly but also finishes all records each day at the farm. He also sees that the permanent herd book is kept up to date. He sees that all calves are ear-tagged and recorded. He keeps up the Proved Bull Work Sheet and as soon as possible proves every bull that has been used in his association herds. The tester makes all reports at the county agent's office and sees that a copy is made for the county agent's file. He works up the publicity material with the county agent. The tester assists the agent with the whole dairy herd improvement program, in planning and carrying it through. He helps his individual members with their feeding and breeding problems.

**The officers** carry on the business of the association. They help the agent and tester to plan the program and to keep it functioning.

**The members** are the most important part of the association and need to cooperate fully with the county agent, the tester, and the officers to make the association of the most value to everyone. Each member must see that his own records, his breeding and calving records, are kept up to date. He must supply the information needed to fill out the headings in the herd book. He should keep his permanent herd book up to date and give the tester the information necessary to prove the bulls used. He must, to keep the association strong and active, talk testing to his neighbors now and then, and help secure new members when needed. He should attend all meetings and take an active part in association doings.

### The Program

**Cow testing.**—Records complete and up to date. Low-producing cows culled. Rations balanced. Feed costs held to a minimum. Reports complete and prompt.

**Breeding.**—Use the assembled production records to build a breeding program. Prove every bull and study through meetings and tours the results obtained by the different bulls used. Develop a program of sire exchange and cooperative ownership (bull association and bull circle). Promote the building of bull pens to keep old bulls in service. Have plans available. Hold at least one meeting a year to study breeding and to report on progress made.

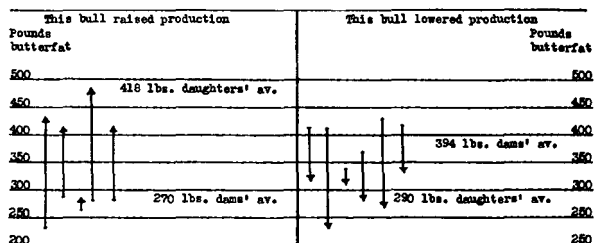
**Disease.**—Have a community program for control of Bang's disease and other diseases.

**Feeding.**—Study and develop management practices for securing the highest quality roughage for the particular community. It may be alfalfa or clover or some other legume. Study and popularize the correct cutting time and curing methods. Study and determine the best pasture methods for the community. Study and develop a positive attitude toward the marketing system.

The above program outline lays out some definite subjects for the association to interest itself in. No association can take on all of them at once. They are not listed in order of their pressing need for solution. Some of them should be

a definite part of the year's program. No association is developing its complete usefulness unless it has a definite program. A cow testing association is a means to an end, not the end itself. Its value depends not on the records themselves, but on the use made of those records.

### Two Minnesota Proved Bulls



Each line on the scale represents 50 pounds of butterfat. The base of the arrow shows the dams' production. The head of the arrow shows the daughters' production. Each owner selected his bull to improve production. The results indicate why the breeding and proved bull program is important.

Dairy cattle breeding can not be successfully carried on without production records. The second bull failed because of faulty breeding. He transmitted the weakness he inherited. Complete production information for generations is necessary to forecast the breeding ability of an animal. Only continuous production records and a careful study of them will help the breeder avoid the all too frequent bull failures illustrated above.

The successful breeder of the future will be the man who not only belongs to a C.T.A. but who follows a constructive breeding program. He will avoid extensive use of a bull until proven and then use him on the proved cow families. Cooperative possibilities here are unlimited for progressive breeders and associations.