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# The Cow Testing Association



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Prepared by

THE DAIRY EXTENSION OFFICE  
AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION DIVISION  
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

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## THE COW TESTING ASSOCIATION

### What It Is

A cow testing association is a cooperative, educational organization comprised of 26 dairymen who hire a trained man to serve as tester for all members. The tester keeps a record of individual cow's milk and butterfat production. He records in the herd book the total amount of feed consumed, the cost of feed, and the value of product and income above or below feed cost for each cow in the herd. The tester is qualified to assist the owner in dairy herd management, which includes feeding and breeding.

The cow testing association serves as a guide in building up and maintaining a profitable dairy herd through the herd owner's adoption of improved feeding practices and a definite breeding policy. It has value in determining the breeding efficiency of the sire through a knowledge of his daughters' production. Cow testing associations are centers for community dairy herd improvement.

### How It Operates

The tester visits each member one day each month (every other month on bi-monthly plan) for the purpose of getting a complete record of each cow's performance. He weighs, samples, and tests the night and morning milkings and determines the amount of butterfat produced for the 24-hour period. Production for the month is determined by multiplying this by the number of days in a month.

Each member provides lodging and meals for the tester on his regular monthly visits and on Sundays or holidays if tester's route brings him to the farm on these days. The member assists the tester in securing necessary information for the herd record book. Interest and cooperation of the members assist and encourage testers to give efficient service.

### How It Is Organized

**Preliminary meeting.**—At the request of a group of interested dairymen in the county the agent will arrange for a meeting of dairy leaders who are willing to take an active part in the organization. At this meeting the purpose, plan of organization, territory to be covered, rate, method of financing, responsibility, and further procedure are discussed. Membership agreement blanks and other forms are furnished

by the Agricultural Extension Division. An extension dairyman attends the meeting to explain details and answer questions. A temporary chairman is appointed, and each dairyman present signs the membership agreement blank and agrees to assist in securing the signatures of other dairymen. This may be done through the appointment of committees who will work together, or, if preferred, by each individual dairyman. Usually two weeks is allowed from date of preliminary meeting to secure the necessary 26 members.

The county agent furnishes publicity through the local newspaper, personal correspondence, and circular letters in regard to the proposed organization. He assists in calling the second meeting and cooperates with creamery operators and managers who promote the organization through their creamery patrons.

**Organization meeting.**—The cow testing association completes permanent organization at this meeting. The county agent and extension dairyman explain further details, plan of organization, rules and regulations, and answer questions. Twenty-four to 26 members are necessary if the association is to function satisfactorily.

Officers are elected and include a president, vice president, secretary-treasurer, and two directors. These constitute a board of directors who will thereafter conduct the business of the association until the next annual election. The constitution and by-laws are discussed and adopted by the members. Annual fees and finance plans are discussed and decided upon. The tester is hired by the association and the date to start testing is set. The association prepares to carry out a definite dairy herd improvement program with the aid of the county agent and extension dairyman.

### The Cost

Certain fixed expenses are involved. Salary of the tester, equipment, and incidental costs are included. They approximate \$3 per month for each member. An understanding of these is essential. Each member must be informed as to charges to be made and cost to him per month. One of the following plans is accepted:

**Flat rate plan.**—All members pay alike regardless of the size of herd up to and including 30 cows or one day's work. This plan is satisfactory to most associations. Tester

devotes one day to each member; herd divisions and rate differentials are eliminated.

**Sliding scale plan.**—Total costs run the same under this plan but the dues are determined according to herd classifications. Usually the divisions are made somewhat as follows (size of herd at the beginning of each quarter would determine classification for that quarter):

Small herd—10 cows or less

Medium herd—11 to 20 cows

Large herd—21 to 30 cows

#### **Payment of Tester**

Most successful associations pay the tester through the secretary-treasurer. This system provides for accurate book accounts and eliminates the tester acting as a collector.

#### **Types of Approved Cow Testing Associations**

**Standard C.T.A.—Monthly Test.**—Requires 24 to 26 members. Tester visits farm one day each month. Rates run approximately \$3 per herd per month. Board of directors handles business affairs of association. A definite dairy herd improvement program is adopted for the association. They meet two to four times a year.

**Standard C.T.A.—Bi-monthly Test.**—Operates the same as the standard monthly type association except that tester visits farm every other month and makes only six tests a year. Requires twice as many members, or 50 to 55. Calculation is based on two months' period. Rates one-half to two-thirds that of monthly test.

**Herd Improvement Register—Monthly or Bi-monthly Test.**—The Herd Improvement Register monthly or bi-monthly test is available to purebred breeders who are members of a Cow Testing Association and wish to take advantage of the Herd Improvement Register tests of their breed association. There are slight additional charges for this service as outlined in Form D-23.

For further information consult the county agent or write to the Agricultural Extension Division, University Farm, St. Paul, Minnesota.