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FARM AND DAIRY



& RURAL HOME

The Recognized Exponent of Dairying in Canada



Trade increases the wealth and glory of a country; but its real strength and stamina are to be looked for among the cultivators of the land.—Lord Chatham

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The Value of the 300-Day Semi-Official Test

Several Well Known United States Ayrshire Breeders Argue the Question Pro and Con

A FEW years ago the various dairy cattle breeders' associations of Canada, discussed the advisability of reducing the length of the Record of Performance test period to 300 days with a proviso that the cow be required to freshen in 12 months instead of 16 as at present. All the associations decided against the change, though a powerful minority in all associations were in favor of the shorter test period. The question is now to be discussed by the United States associations, and in preparation therefor, The Ayrshire Quarterly publishes letters from leading Ayrshire breeders south of the border, giving opinions, both for and against the change. Canadian breeders of all the dairy breeds will be interested in these arguments which are reproduced herewith.

The Value of a 300-Day A. R. Test

By Hugh J. Chisholm.

THE primary functions of a dairy cow are to reproduce herself and to give milk. Under natural conditions she performs the former function once every twelve months, consequently all the past and present 365-day world's records have been made under artificial conditions, and it is rarely that you find an animal who has made a world's record who has not weakened herself and her offspring in so doing. It is too long a time to put a cow under a great strain.

In the breeding of pure bred cattle, the most important work which the breeder is trying to accomplish is to breed better and better cattle, and to always have the calf superior to the dam. To accomplish the greatest results along these lines, it is necessary that the calves be as numerous as possible, without injuring the health of the dam. From a money standpoint I estimate the value of a pure bred cow, after she has proven herself at the milk pail, more by the quality and quantity of her calves, than by the quantity of milk which she gives. It is a well known fact repeatedly proven by our A. R. work that a cow will give almost as much milk in a ten-months' milking period as in a twelve-months' milking period. If we adopt a 300-day test it will allow the cow to produce a calf every twelve months as nature intended, and the owner will be better off at the end of five years. The net return is easily shown to be in favor of the 300-day test. If you will take a cow which is capable of giving 12,000 pounds of milk in 365 days, and run her for a period of five years in 365-day tests, at the end of this time she will have given 48,000 pounds of milk and four calves, allowing fifteen months between freshening. Give her the same care and attention for a 300-day test, and she will produce at least 10,000 pounds of milk per year, allow two months for freshening, and at the end of five years she

will have to her credit 50,000 pounds of milk and five calves, or a balance of 2,000 pounds of milk and a calf in favor of the 300-day test.

Another reason of importance and worthy of consideration, is that it is a much easier and less expensive task to run a cow for 300 days than for 365 days in the A. R. work. The 300-day test would have the result of putting the average farmer more nearly on a par or equal with the owner of a large breeding herd. This would result in stimulating interest and would undoubtedly produce a great many more A. R. records, than with our present system.

The 300-Day Test

C. H. Eckles, University of Missouri.

I ASSUME the main purpose of a 300-day Advanced Register test would be to have the length of the testing period when cows calve at 12 month intervals as is usual in herds not tested for Advanced Register. It gives the additional

advantage of making it possible for the owner of a cow the offspring of which are especially valuable for breeding purposes to make an official record and still get a calf within the year. While these points deserve consideration I do not feel that they are sufficient to justify changing from the present system. Unless some provision is added concerning the production of a calf within certain limits I do not believe the present system of handling cows on test will be changed in many cases by making a 300-day test period. The 300-day test will mean reporting the production for this period and the breeding of the cow will still be deferred in order to make a good record for a full 12 months. Merely reporting the first 300 days of a lactation period extending over 12 or 14 months does not add any value to the record from a practical standpoint and the man that does not breed the cow on test still has the advantage.

I do feel, however, that the yearly record increased as it often is by deferring breeding is misleading and the public should know the facts, in my judgment the plan followed by the Jersey Club meets the situation better than does the 300-day test. Provision is made for two classes. Entry is made in one class by the record alone, and if a calf is dropped within 120 days after the end of the test the animal is put in another class with greater distinction. If a 300-day test period is adopted I am in favor of a provision requiring that the entry will be made only when the cow gives birth to a calf within 60 or at the outside, 120 days after the test is completed.

Its Advantages are Manifold

By A. Henry Higginson.

IT seems to me that the principal argument against the adoption of the three hundred-day A. R. test, is that the other breed associations have not adopted it, and that when one compares the A. R. records of Ayrshires with those of other breeds many people will not realize the difference in the length of the test, which would be to the detriment of the breed. Although it is a perfectly simple matter to say that our test is a 300-day test, some people will immediately raise the question as to why the Ayrshire Association adopts a shorter period than the one recognized by the other breed associations. Of course, it is always easy to explain, but the very fact that we would have to explain, to make excuses, is a detriment in some measure. Between Ayrshire men, who understand, of course, all this would be unnecessary, and it would only be to outsiders that this explanation would have to be made. This seems to me the only disadvantage.

Now let us consider its advantages. The man who puts his cow in an A. R. test to-day, loses a

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Purchasing Winter Concentrates

THE farmer who has grass hay (such as timothy) and corn ensilage, must buy meals on the basis of cheapness of protein. At present prices these in order of cheapness are: Cottonseed meal, dried distillers' grains, linseed oil meal, gluten feed, wheat bran, shorts, middlings, and oats. If, on the other hand, he has alfalfa or clover hay, corn or other good silage and roots he need purchase less meal and should select on the basis of cheapness of total digestible nutrients. At present prices these in order are: Dried distillers' grains, beet pulp, wheat middlings and bran, gluten feed, cottonseed meal, linseed oil meal, and oats. Then follow these four rules:

1. Buy the highest quality feeds, not those containing dirt, filler and indigestible fibre.
2. Buy feeds containing the desirable elements in the cheapest form.
3. Buy cooperatively, in car-load lots if possible, and thus save extra freight charges and commissions.
4. Buy when markets are lowest, usually in the summer and fall, and save the storage, handling charges, and, usually, extra profits made by the millers and dealers.—Experimental Farms Note.