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DAIRY HERD MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS-

OFFICIAL

Texas Agricultural Extension Service
The Texas A&M University System
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DAIRY HERD MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS

OFFICIAL PROGRAMS

- DHI - All cows, both registered and grade, can be enrolled in Dairy Herd Improvement (DHI). The information provided is used for making on-the-farm decisions on feeding, breeding, management and cost analyses. The records are used also in the genetic appraisal of cows and sires and in the promotion and sale of animals.
- DHIR - Dairy men with herds that meet the requirements of their respective breed association (PDCA member) may enroll their registered animals in the Dairy Herd Improvement Registry (DHIR).

Production records of all registered cows of that breed in the herd will be acceptable for use by the breed registry organization. An additional set of rules (DyS-1639) governs the DHIR herds.

HOW TO ENROLL IN A PROGRAM

- Association - To enroll in an official program, a local Dairy Herd Improvement Association (DHIA) should be operating in your geographical area. Contact your county Extension agent or Extension dairy specialist, Texas A&M University, for information on operational DHIA's. To have official records, your herd must be enrolled in a state or local association.
- Supervisor - An individual is employed by a local association to routinely record milk weights, milkfat samples and management information. This individual has field and classroom training to prepare him for a DHI supervisor's position.
- Dairyman - It takes a willing dairyman to enroll in DHI programs. Once enrolled, the dairyman should

use his records for better management and decisionmaking.

- **Measuring Devices** - Devices acceptable for obtaining milk weights for official DHI and DHIR records must be used strictly in accordance with the manufacturer's directions. Devices that can be used are:
 - Accurate scales
 - Meters
 - Milk-O-Meter
 - Surge Tru-Test
 - Waikato Milk and Rate Meter
 - Rigid Mounted Weigh Jars
 - Chore-Boy Rool-O-Measure
 - Bou-Matic Rigid Mounted Weigh Jar
 - DeLaval Rigid Mounted Weigh Jar
 - Sta-Rite Rigid Mounted Weigh Jar
 - Surge Rigid Mounted Weigh Jar
 - Top Line Accu-Measure Weigh Jar
 - Universal Rigid Mounted Weigh Jar
 - Zero Weigh Jar

WHAT MUST BE REPORTED MONTHLY?

- **Dairyman** - The dairyman maintains a form for recording dates for calving, drying off, disposals, aborting, breedings and heats. In addition to the dates, he also keeps a record of the sires to whom the cows were bred, identification of calves and reasons for disposing of cows. All this information should now be kept by the dairyman for his normal operation.
- **Supervisor** - The supervisor visits the dairy once a month for two milkings. He uses an approved measuring device and obtains a proportionate sample for milkfat from each cow. He records on barn sheets all the information provided by the dairyman. The completed sheets are sent along with the milkfat samples to a central lab for milkfat determination and then to the Southern Regional Processing Center for processing.

WHAT CAN A DAIRYMAN EXPECT?

- **Feeding** - A major expense for the dairyman is feeding the herd. Records show how much concentrate is being fed each cow and if she is getting enough concentrate for her production level. In addition, the herd summary feeding information shows the dairyman what is being fed the total herd. This indicates what might be needed next year.
- **Culling** - An immediate use of the records is for culling. Cows are ranked by their relative position in the herd based on 4 percent fat corrected milk, total income from milk, income over feed cost, persistency of lactation, production to test day and mature equivalent production. Also when a cow completes a lactation, the dairyman receives a complete history page for that cow. Semiannual listings for estimated relative producing ability on cows in the herd indicates what a cow can be expected to produce during her next lactation above herdmates. All this information can aid the dairyman in making sound culling decisions.
- **Management** - Although the man in management is the most important part, he is limited by available information. Records give him individual cow or herd summary information for making management decisions.
- **Production** - Production records are provided on each cow and on the herd. These records are used in many ways by the dairyman.
- **Reproduction** - Reproduction is a major problem associated with a dairy operation. Records show which cows have been open over 60 days without a breeding date and which cows have been open over 100 days without a breeding date. Herd summary information indicates whether the problem is with heat detection or whether the cows have physiological problems.
- **Mastitis** - An optional program available through local associations is the Wisconsin Mastitis test, a screening test for mastitis. This subclinical test provides a routine, early-defense warning mechanism to use in herd health programs. The supervisor performs this test on an unpreserved milk sample.

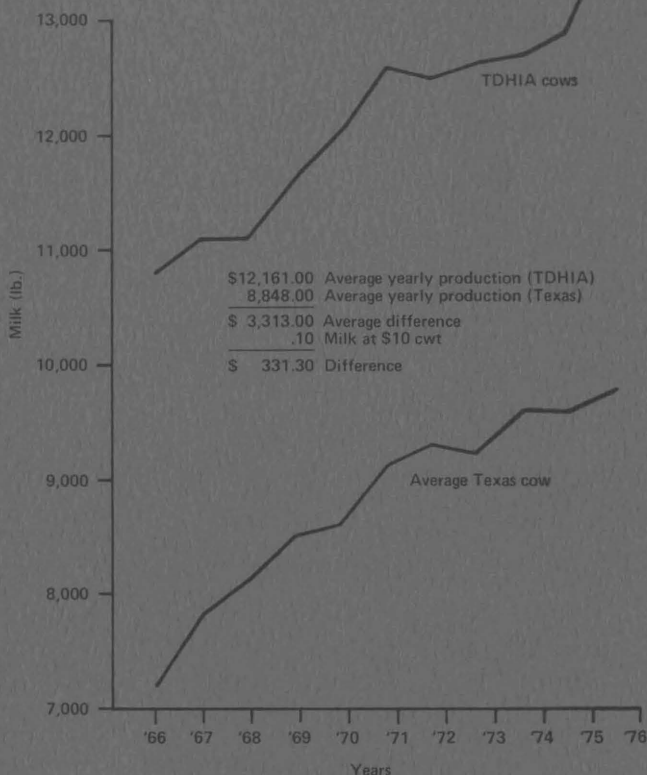
● Special Options - Several features of the computerized DHI program are available on an optional basis in addition to the standard program. These options provide extra service and information for herd management for dairymen requesting such services. Available listings include:

- Special management list, including
 - Cows open
 - Cows bred in last 60 days
 - Cows due to calve
 - Cows to turn dry
- Test day milk production
- Test day fat production
- Cows to consider for culling
- Extra copies
- Application for requesting page
- 365-day record
- No feeding information
- Milk only record
- AM-PM record

All official programs are regulated by the "Official Dairy Herd Improvement Rules" (DyS-1653). Your county Extension agent has more information concerning this program or you may contact the Extension Dairy Specialist, The Texas A&M University System, 110 Herman Heep Building, College Station, Texas 77843.

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DOES TESTING COST?



NO, IT PAYS!

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