

Agricultural News

P. E. I. Department of Agriculture

ARTIFICIAL INSEMINATION. Artificial insemination is young enough for most of us to remember the hopes and fears which attended its birth. Now, fifteen years later, we cannot say that either the optimists or the pessimists have proved their case. The technical problems have not proved insurmountable. It is generally accepted that several thousand cows can be bred to one bull during a year and that the conception rate obtained is comparable with that obtained by natural service. The service, therefore, has proved to be cheap and reliable and there is little doubt that the poorer herds of this and other countries, the herds below the average of their respective breeds, are benefiting both in type and production through membership in artificial insemination associations. The short term benefits and perhaps the hope of others not yet realized, have been sufficient to enroll over half of the cattle of Denmark and about one-third of the cattle in England and Wales in an insemination program. The proportion of the cattle population enrolled in Canada and the United States is smaller but it is rising constantly. No one can predict with accuracy what the ultimate proportion will be and there is little point in guessing. But it is at least a probability, granting that progress in the next ten years will be slower than in the past ten, that the majority of our dairy cattle are going to be bred artificially. It follows that the standards of the industry, for better or for worse will be in a large measure, those which are adhered to by organized artificial insemination. In other words, the kind of dairy cattle we have here twenty-five years from now, what they look like and their production potential, and to a large extent, the structure of the dairy cattle breeding industry, will depend on the policies adopted and pursued in the next few years by the artificial breeding associations.

To help frame the situation more precisely, it might be of value to discuss briefly a few of the more important points on which organized insemination has been subjected to criticism, either here or elsewhere, and which must, therefore, be considered in establishing breeding policy.

First, there has too often been a tendency in our thinking to over-emphasize the importance of breeding in overall cattle improvement. It is still true that the quickest gains in terms of profit to the dairymen can be made through improvements in feeding, management and disease control. Most of our cattle now do not produce to their genetic level and raising that level will often prove disappointing without a corresponding improvement in environmental factors. Responsibility for improvement of these environmental factors has not rested on the insemination associations and perhaps this is as it should be. Nevertheless, despite its several aspects, cattle improvement is the common objective and I would like to throw out the suggestion that insemination associations might profitably explore ways and means of supporting extension activities dealing with aspects of dairy production other than breeding, if only to ensure the success of their own program.

Another point on which insemination has been criticized concerns the possibilities of the widespread and rapid dissemination of undesirable or even lethal inherited characteristics. This problem has been emphasized in this country and U. S. A. by the part insemination has undoubtedly played in spreading the "red factor" in Holstein cattle. A much more serious but similarly transmitted factor for paralysis in Red Danish cattle is causing a great concern in Denmark. Numerous other undesirable characteristics could be cited as potential disasters. By planning a program to uncover such recessives before they are widely spread, insemination associations can be the means of their elimination, but the efforts must be made.

The most serious criticism heard of organized artificial insemination is that it offers little if anything in the way of genetic improvements to the herd which is already up to or above the average for its breed. There is some evidence to support this claim. At the Cambridge centre in England the first group of bulls sired daughters which barely maintained the mediocre production of their dams. Other figures from England on the production of A. I. daughters are unimpressive. In Denmark, while the average production of the national herd is high, it was high before A. I. became a factor and genetic improvement would appear to be slight. In this country, other data to prove the point are lacking but we have little reason to believe that our situation differs markedly from that prevailing in Great Britain or Denmark. Certainly we have had our disappointments and some of them have been costly.

This is one problem on which there seems to be a large measure of agreement in regard to a solution. It is generally agreed that when a complex inherited characteristic such as milk production, is present in a group of animals

at or above the breed average, it can only be improved with certainty by the use of sires which have shown through their progeny that they are themselves above the breed average genetically for the characteristic. While there is agreement on that general statement, there are wide differences of opinion as to how such sires should be judged. It is probably true to say that in our present state of knowledge there is no "best method" which is generally applicable. In each country different approaches to the problem prevail, the differences being dictated partly by individual conviction and partly varying conditions. We, in this country, will have to develop our own method of evaluating our bulls, taking what ideas we can from the experience of others and adapting them to our own conditions. Bull proving is essentially obtaining information and using it; we must use the sources of information available or which can be made available or using it.

TREATMENT. During the summer and fall, the principal Bluecomb season every person working on the farm particularly those who work on the range should be instructed to check carefully on feed consumption. When a decrease in feed consumption occurs discontinue scratch grain once or reduce the total feed offered if the all mash or all pellet system is used. In case of doubt it is better to discontinue grain feed for a day until the outbreak is definitely identified than to give a full feed supply.

Two remedies have proved to be effective, molasses and potassium chloride. Potassium chloride is less expensive and can be fed with much less labour than molasses, consequently potassium chloride is recommended particularly for treating large flocks. Blackstrap molasses may be fed in full mash on in the drinking water. Use 25 lbs. of molasses, 50 lbs. of bran and 650 lbs. of ground oats. Growing mash or laying mash may be fed if ground oats and bran are not available. For a small flock use 1 qt. of molasses to 10 lbs. of mash, food the amount of wet mash that the birds will clean up in 2 or 3 hours preferably in the morning, every other day for a week. Molasses in the drinking water may be used at the rate of 5 percent.

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Being part of the Animal Pathology Division our main work in Sackville is to carry on research on diseases of animals and poultry, especially on disease problems which may be of particular interest in this area. One place where this branch laboratory setup is particularly valuable is in carrying out cross-country surveys. In this connection our setup permits us to handle all samples in the same manner even though they may be handled at different ends of the country. In this way the results can be more closely correlated, with the variant factors between laboratories reduced to a minimum. Several such surveys have already been completed and include surveys on such diseases as infectious bronchitis in chickens, swine erysipelas, swine brucellosis, and trichinosis in rats and swine.

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The symptoms in a typical acute form is that a large proportion of an apparently healthy flock shows a sudden affliction which is characterized by depression, lack of appetite, and a whitish or watery diarrhoea. The first effects is an abrupt decrease in food consumption, particularly scratch grain. Instead of the grain being eaten ravenously a considerable portion of it may be left on the ground untouched. Mash consumption may decrease but this evidence is less pronounced. Chickens usually stand around inactive with little or no interest in food. Consumption of feed on the next day is almost at a standstill. Affected birds make no attempt to move and can be picked up easily. In the advanced stages the head and feet are cold, the comb and wattles turn blue and the crop is usually filled and hard.

In most cases the acute form of the disease extends over a period of from one to two weeks and terminates in a high percentage of apparent recoveries, usually if prompt attention is given to the ailing flock. Egg production however tends to lag for several weeks and a partial molt may ensue. After the acute attack has subsided relapse may occur.

ANIMAL HEALTH SERVICES. The laboratory in Sackville is the Maritime Area Laboratory of the Animal Pathology Division. Before discussing its facilities and services it might be mentioned here that there are two divisions in the federal Department of Agriculture which deal with animal disease. Both of these now come under Production Service. One is the Health of Animals Division. This is a regulatory division and deals with the control of various diseases in the field such as tuberculosis, Newcastle disease, hog cholera and Bang's disease. This division is also responsible for the inspection of meat products which go into interprovincial or export trade.

The other division is the Animal Pathology Division of which we form a part. This is essentially a research division dealing with animal diseases, but it also provides laboratory service for the Health of Animals Division as well as for other interested parties. In addition, our division manufactures biologics and other products, and provides consultative services for other government departments.

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Ruhamah Scheinfeld Frank We And Our Neighbors

CAN YOU JUDGE CHARACTER? It is pathetic to note the qualities people often mistakenly pride themselves on when they have real cause for pride in other directions. The mother of a large family of fine young men and women took that achievement as a matter of course but did believe with considerable satisfaction that she "knew whom to trust and whom not to trust" almost on first sight! It developed, in the course of our conversation growing out of my last week's column on facial features and personality, that she was still certain that small eyes close together indicated "a mean little nature" and that "one of those sharp thin noses" betokened the same. And that a receding chin showed a "weakness somewhere you may be sure."

I tried to pin the lady down to specific instances but she said she just had that feeling and refused to have much to do "with that sort of a person." So, so often happens she had never put her "feeling" to the test. Nor had she (or so many of us!) noted the times when individuals with "wide-set, honest eyes" or other features acceptable to her had proved anything but trust-worthy. For those who are still open to argument I repeat that there is no scientific proof of an inborn connection between single facial characteristics and personality traits. But there is quite a bit of

evidence to the contrary. Now, confidentially, haven't you sometimes been shocked to find a pictured face, frank-eyed, firm chinned, pleasant in every way, confronting you in a newspaper or magazine as that of man (or woman) guilty of a horrible crime? This is shocking but not surprising.

In 1940 "one of the greatest of anthropologists, the late Dr. Alex Hrdlicka" (The New York and Heredity by Amram Scheinfeld) measured carefully 1000 juvenile delinquents and came to the conclusion "there were no physical criteria for distinguishing the 'potential' criminal or the 'criminal type'."

In his booklet, "Race and Psychology" a Unesco (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) publication, Otto Klineberg, Professor of Psychology, Columbia University, says, "There has so far been no scientifically acceptable demonstration of a relationship between anatomical features and traits of personality. To mention one example, an investigation was made into the degree of correspondence or correlation between the height of the forehead on the one hand, and scores in an intelligence test on the other. The popular view was not substantiated. The students with high foreheads did not turn out to be more intelligent than those whose foreheads were low. A similar result was obtained

in the case of many other physical thick lips." characteristics. There appears to be no difference either in intelligence or personality between blondes and brunettes, between round-headed or long-headed or round or narrow eyes, or thin or

Wed., Oct. 12, 1955 The Guardian Page 5



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Mademoiselle Bombshell is what the critics are calling this saucy new star from Paris. London acclaimed her, Warner Brothers of Hollywood gave her a three-year contract on sight. The story with color pictures is in The Standard this week. Get The Standard—on sale now, complete with magazine, 12-page novel and 20 pages of comics. Only ten cents!

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