

FARM NEWS

From Halton's Farm Lands

OVER-STOCKING TOPIC AT MEETING OF HERD IMPROVEMENT ASS'NS.

"Is it cheaper to purchase rather than raise the necessary replacement heifers for the average dairy herd?" was one of the many questions asked of the panel members at the annual meeting of Halton's three dairy Herd Improvement Associations in Milton, on Monday, March 28.

Despite heavy roads and blocked lanes a large number were out for the morning session to hear Cliff Morrow, dairy specialist of the Ontario Livestock Branch, Mr. Morrow dealt with the subject "D.H.I.A. Records as a Basis for Proving Herd Sires". Certainly the research program being conducted at the Ontario Agricultural College on this subject is bringing to light a tremendous amount of valuable information regarding the relative ability of herd sires of the Holstein breed, to transmit type and production.

To get back to the question of whether it is cheaper to purchase or raise the necessary replacement heifers in the average commercial dairy herd, John Clark of the Farm Economics Branch, Toronto, admitted that their studies revealed that it costs as much or more to raise a heifer to milking age than such heifers can be produced for at the present time.

On the other hand, it was the consensus, keeping in mind the disease problem and herd improvement, that it is sound business to raise heifer calves from the better cows in one's herd.

All Calves Not Economical
Prior to the embargo a few years ago as a result of the outbreak of foot and mouth disease Canada enjoyed an almost unlimited market in the U.S. for surplus dairy heifers and cows. Due to the high dairy cattle population in the U.S., the demand for Canadian commercial dairy cattle for export has been drastically curtailed since the embargo was lifted. As a result, a large percentage of our Ontario dairy farms are filled to capacity. Certainly on the majority of our Halton dairy farms there are more young cattle coming along than are required for replacement purposes.

It was Mr. Morrow's opinion that if we are to improve our dairy cattle we should restrict or curtail the raising of heifer calves to those which in D.H.I.A. receive gold and red seal certificates. With this contention, we heartily agree. In the years when we had an almost unlimited export market for commercial grades and pure-breds it was, perhaps, economically sound to raise practically every heifer calf. Today that isn't true and if we are to raise the average production of our D.H.I.A. herds from 8,150 lbs. of milk and 294 lbs. B.F., which was the average figure for the year ending April 30th, 1954, then surely it would be economically sound to cull all of the calves irrespective of sex, from cows which fail to qualify in either D.H.I.A. or R.O.P.

The final part of the interesting day's program was spent in visiting the farms of Fred and Harvey Nurse. At both farms there was much of interest to all dairymen.

Plans were made to lay down comprehensive tests and demonstrations during the spring and summer.

Inasmuch as hay and pasture constitute the most valuable crops produced in the general farming area in Halton, the question of getting satisfactory catches of small seeds is a most important factor. With the hope of throwing more light on this controversial subject, a comprehensive test is to be laid down this spring, on the farm of A. T. Woodley, near Milton. On the farm, replicated tests with eight varieties of oats and a similar number of varieties of barley will also be laid down.

Does Liming Pay?
Again with the hope of getting more data on the question of liming, it is planned to lay down at least one test in each of the Township of the county. Sites will be selected on the basis of soil test and applications will be made at both two and four ton rates.

As a medium of securing more definite data on varieties; the question of the amount of commercial fertilizer which can be economically applied; cultural practices, etc.; the Halton Association is planning to sponsor a 90 Bushel Grain Corn Competition. On the more loamy soils, particularly in the Lowville, Kiltbide and Georgetown areas, considerable of this crop is already being grown. The competition will be open to all Halton growers and will call for a minimum area of, at least three acres. Those interested should contact directors R. A. Huron or Brock Harris, or the Agricultural Office, in Milton.

In order to test out the new variety, Rodney, the Halton Association, states president E. Ross Segsworth, will sponsor a 4-H Grain Club. Each of 20 Club Members will be supplied with one bushel of this variety which is very short supply. The Rodney is some four or five days later than Beaver, but in 1954 was the second highest yielding variety tested at 24 different points in Ontario. The top variety was Garry, another new variety which is not available for distribution this year.

Wild Carrot Control
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**Soil & Crop Ass'n.
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on the third line of Esqueping proved to be a failure, the association is planning to continue its war against wild carrot. Applications of 2-4 D have given excellent results on most other roadside weeds, but in the opinion of most Halton folk it has not been too effective in killing wild carrot on Halton roadsides.

It is generally agreed that commercial fertilizer has been largely responsible in eliminating the hazard of winter-killing. In order to get some idea of the point where additional quantities of commercial fertilizers fail to give economic returns, the Association is planning to lay down acre blocks on the farm of W. E. Brockton, using applications ranging from 100 lbs. to 400 lbs. per acre of 4-24-12.

The program of the Association also includes tests with commercial fertilizer on potatoes; a regional variety test with soybeans; two demonstrations with long term pasture mixtures; a one day bus trip; etc. and etc.



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