Dairy Cattle

Wood county farmers own approximately 55,000 head of dairy cattle, of which 40,000 head are milk cows. The average production of butterfat is somewhat less than 200 pounds per cow. With present feed prices, overhead expenses and other items it is necessary that a cow produces more than 200 pounds of butterfat annually if she is to make a profit for her owner on most farms. More profitable production can be secured in several ways.

1. **Disease Must Be Eliminated.** Breeding difficulty with more than 20% of cattle is experienced by many farmers. Cargot and mastitis still infects many herds. Twelve hundred herds have been tested for Bang's disease with more than 2800 reacting to the test and sold for slaughter. When cattle are free from Bang's disease breeding problems and sterility largely disappear.

2. **Selection of Better or High Producing Cows.** The cost of 100 pounds of milk from a cow producing 175 pounds of butterfat annually is two or three times as high as the cost of producing 100 pounds of milk from the cow producing 300 pounds of butterfat. A good operator with efficient feeding, good labor efficiency and reasonable overhead costs wastes considerable of his time operating a dairy herd with production less than 200 pounds of butterfat annually.

3. **Use Only Sires That Have the Ability to Transmit Increased Production to Their Offspring.** More than 30% of the sires used by Wood county farmers are of unknown ancestry. It takes several years of a farmers lifetime to "Prove" a bull. Many farmers using poor bulls are finding their herds of young cattle poorer than their dams.

4. **The Wise Methods of Selection and Mating of Cattle.** Time spent selecting the inheritance factors that will make for a good mating pays dairymen well. With better prices for farm products farmers will discontinue the practices of using bulls of nondescript character.

**Cow Testing Association:** The Wood county cow testing association is operating at full capacity with a field man testing and weighing the milk from each cow in each of 26 herds of cattle one day each month. Field man figures cost of feed and return from the butterfat from each cow. Members of the cow testing association are making sincere efforts to develop a high producing herd. The following men were awarded certificates by the National Dairy Association:

1. A. P. Bean  
2. Merwin Blanchard  
3. Roy Burhopp  
4. Wm. Ehler  
5. Geo. Kieffer  
6. John Kieffer  
7. Mrs. V. A. Lee  
8. Fred Meyer  
9. H. L. O'Bear  
10. J. B. Ostermeyer  
11. Peterson Brothers  
12. Gilbert Tomfohrde  
13. Rudy Weinfurter
Several of the herds have produced on an average of 400 pounds of butterfat per cow. A 30 cow herd producing 400 pounds of butterfat at 60¢ per pound will bring a dairy man $7200 gross income annually. There is an opportunity for farmers to form many new cow testing associations.

Bang's Disease: Cows appraised at $90 and bringing $30.00 net on the market for beef will net the owner an additional $20.00 indemnity, making a total payment of $80.00 for a diseased cow. Under the voluntary testing plan each farmer is entitled to three complete clean tests and receives a certification certificate from the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture when his herd is proved clean. The extension office assists farmers applying for voluntary Bang’s tests.

Bull Costs: Sixty dollars is the average annual cost of keeping a bull according to reports of several farmers. In a 15 cow herd this makes the average bull charge $4.00 per cow. Several farmers are interested in organizing a cooperative breeding association for the purpose of securing the service of a better bull at a lower cost than that they are now paying for nondescript bulls. With a breeders cooperative one extra cow can be kept in place of the bull so that the bull charge per cow could be materially reduced. Any community in Wood county starting a cooperative breeding association will find cattle buyers seeking out the heifers from the outstanding sires.

Breeding Associations: The Wood County Holstein Freisian Association in cooperation with the county agent’s office, sponsored a "Black and White" show, judged by Robert Geiger and R. W. Stumbo of Fort Atkinson. The judges reported that the show was the best of its kind held this year in Wisconsin, Michigan, Minnesota and North Dakota. Cows, heifers and bulls were judged on the Danish system. A purple ribbon was awarded to George Kieffer of Auburndale for his excellent cow. Guernsey, Brown Swiss, and Jersey breeders have organizations in the county which render valuable services to their membership.

- Horses -

The horse population is on the increase. Prices for farm horses have declined slightly, but farmers find it profitable to grow their own horsepower. Tractors are probably more expensive than horsepower on small farms and usually the herd of cattle has to support the tractor. There are 15 stallions serving Wood county. About 400 colts were foaled this year. This year at the Central Wisconsin State Fair at Marshfield, a horse pulling demonstration was conducted by the fair association. Farmers are interested in tandem hitch demonstrations and ways and means by which better horsepower can be developed.

Sleeping Sickness: Sleeping sickness (Encephalomyelitis) reoccurred in the county in 1941, but did not reach the epidemic stage. Several humans in Wisconsin have succumbed to this disease which affects horses primarily.
Horses & Mules (Thousands)  - FARMING GONE COMMERCIAL -  Tractors (Thousands)

26,000
24,000
22,000
20,000
18,000
16,000
14,000

1910  '15  1920  '25  1930  '35  1940

Number of tractors and horses and mules on farms, United States, January 1, 1910 - 1940

Swine

Forty-five hundred head of swine are kept by Wood county farmers. Because of the small number of hogs, there has been little or no disease. Most of the hog raising problems are confined to infestation of round worms, necro, thumps, etc. Many farmers find it profitable to raise their own meat supply and some for sale. Several farmers have sold more than $1,000 worth of hogs this year.

Farm boys in 4-H club work have used swine as projects in many localities. An annual 4-H swine show is held each year at the Central Wisconsin State Fair at Marshfield. One 4-H club boy won $225.00 this year in prize money on swine and sheep which he exhibited at local fairs.

Sheep

The sheep population of the county is confined to the well drained soil areas of the county. Many farmers can raise a few sheep as an additional source of income. 4-H club members have demonstrated that sheep can be raised at a profit. Sheep are generally infested with parasites. About the only problems that sheep owners have are docking, castrating lambs, and dipping to control parasites, also drenching.

An excellent sheep show is put on each year by 4-H club members at the Central Wisconsin State Fair at Marshfield.

Much of the wool produced in the county has been sold through the Wisconsin Cooperative Wool Pool. Farmers are better satisfied to sell their wool on grade than to sell it as an ungraded product.

The county agent has given help and suggestions to most of the wool growers on the subject of cooperative marketing. Sheep producers are in need of better rams.
White Leghorns make up about 80% of the poultry flocks in Wood county. Poultry and poultry products bring in about 11% of the total county cash income. The county agent has frequently been requested to diagnose poultry diseases, such as leukemia, tuberculosis, roup, range paralysis, coccidiosis and many other diseases. Most poultry diseases are soil borne. The prevention of these diseases can be accomplished by the adoption of a strict poultry sanitation program.

Poultry is a project that lends itself particularly well to 4-H club boys' and girls' projects. An excellent poultry exhibit is made annually at the Central Wisconsin State Fair at Marshfield. The Marshfield exhibit is usually the largest 4-H club exhibit in Wisconsin.

ADVERTISING WOOD COUNTY'S PRODUCTS

Cranberries and cheese have been designated by the committee on advertising to receive major promotional work. More than 1200 gift packs were prepared and sold by the Wood County Agricultural Products Inc. (Co-op.) during the last holiday season.

The best cheese was secured and placed in the gift pack along with the best flavored and longest keeping cranberries. The entire lot of fancy Howes produced in the county was purchased by the cooperative and packed in attractive gift boxes with the nation’s finest cheese. Orders for gift packs were received from business concerns and individuals in Wood county as well as elsewhere in the U. S. A. Gift packs were sent to practically all sections of the United States and many foreign countries.

The organization operates without capital structure and became successful only through the goodwill of hundreds of Wood county citizens who supported the idea.

Excellent comments have been received from hundreds of friends to whom gift packs were sent.

The purpose of producing this gift pack was to draw attention to the county's excellent cheese and cranberries and to show the need and demand for a fine quality cheese.

The Board of Directors of the organization is as follows:

W. W. Clark, Vesper . . . . . . . . . . President
Vernon Goldsworthy, Wis. Rapids . . . . . Vice President
H. R. Luthrope, Wis. Rapids . . . . . . Sec. & Treas.
Ralph Roberts, Nekoosa
Ed. Vruwink, Arpin
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