

METHOD OF USING PRODUCTION RECORDS

Information published in this bulletin is based on lactation records reported by the D.H.I.A. Fieldmen. The number of milkings per day, the length of lactation, the age at calving to the nearest month, the length of the preceding dry period, and any abnormal conditions which might affect production are reported for each record. Checking of the accuracy of this information is confined to periodic field inspection of the fieldman's work, and to mistakes detected in his reports. The age, days in milk, and average per cent butterfat are checked by the Records Office.

Registered animals are reported under their registry name and number, and the sire, dam, and date of birth are checked with the breed herd registry books before being accepted and filed by the Records Office. Unregistered animals are reported under their official Wisconsin (T.B. or Bang's Test) ear tag number. It will soon be possible to check the date of birth, sire, and dam of unregistered animals in tested herds with the Ear Tag Identification File in the Division of D.H.I.A. Investigations, Bureau of Dairy Industry, U. S. D. A.

All production records are calculated, where necessary, to a two milkings per day, 305 day complete lactation, mature cow basis. The average of all normal records is used as the production of any individual cow. This makes it possible to compare different cows, or daughters with their dams, under more nearly the same conditions of test.

Incomplete lactation records adjusted to a 305 day basis are used whenever the cow has no other complete lactation record. In cases where several daughters of a sire are sold for low production before completing a lactation period, this policy helps in obtaining an unselected sample of each sire's daughters.

Averaging several records for each cow tends to remove the effect of any particularly poor or particularly good feed years. However, in many cases of young cows or of sires "proved" in the last two years, the effects of the 1934 and 1936 droughts have lowered the production level considerably. *As yet, no satisfactory practical method of adjusting for the feed conditions under which the record was made is available.*