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## **How to run a cow testing association. Bulletin no. 7 February 1914**

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[s.l.]: [s.n.], February 1914

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# WISCONSIN BANKERS' FARM BULLETIN

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## "HOW TO RUN A COW TESTING ASSOCIATION"

BY

G. R. INGALLS

REPRESENTATIVE U. S. DEPARTMENT  
OF AGRICULTURE



A "Daily Record" will determine whether a cow is "worth her board".

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## WISCONSIN BANKERS' ASSOCIATION

J. R. WHEELER,

Chairman Agricultural Committee  
Columbus, Wis.

GEO. D. BARTLETT

Association Secretary  
Pabst Building, Milwaukee

[Farmers desiring to receive these "Bulletins" monthly should notify nearest bank  
member of this Association.]

# MAKING EACH COW PAY

BY G. R. INGALLS

REPRESENTATIVE FOR EAU CLAIRE COUNTY

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Denmark has made good in the dairy business. She has been successful because her citizens have realized the value of working together for their common good, and have adopted a practical way of finding out which cows were profit makers. Experience has proven that the best and most economical way to find out the profit makers is through a Co-operative Cow Testing Association. By means of these associations Denmark, in 15 years, has doubled the average annual butter fat production of each cow. Wisconsin dairymen can do likewise.

The testing of one's herd is a straight business proposition, and the Co-operative Cow Testing Association is the best and most economical way of getting the work done. No successful merchant handles a line of goods on which he does not make a profit; likewise no progressive dairyman will milk a cow on which he does not make the greatest profit possible.

When a cow owner appreciates this fact he will want to know what each individual cow is doing for him; he will welcome the organization of an association and gladly have his herd entered. He will talk the merits of the cow testing association to his acquaintances, and will be willing to spend a day or more in going with the county or state organizer to acquaint his neighbors with the opportunity for them to find out what their cows are doing. Enthusiasm and a one-way pull together, at the same time by every one who is interested in progressive agriculture gets results that are surprising.

The plan for running a cow testing association is to hire a man who will spend one day each month with each farmer who takes on the work, or in case the herds are small and located reasonably close together, one day with two farmers. The tester comes to the farmer in the afternoon, weighs the milk of each cow night and morning and takes a composite sample from the two milkings for making the test; he also weighs all feed fed.

The tester determines the monthly milk production of each cow by using the one day's weighing as a base or by adding up the milk sheet for the farmer when he weighs every milking which, for several reasons, he is advised to do. After the tests have been run, the per cent of fat and all findings are recorded in a Record Book especially prepared for this work and furnished without charge by the State Dairymen's Association. At the end of the year the owner of a herd can see what each cow has produced, and the amount and cost of feed. Profits are shown and the "think" or "guess" is replaced with definite knowledge regarding each animal in the herd.

Successful organization necessitates getting into the Association 400 or more cows comprising 26 or more herds. For several reasons it is very desirable that

the necessary number of cows be secured within as small an area as possible. The cost to the farmer will be from \$1.00 to \$1.50 per cow per year, and board for the tester the day he works, and on Sunday when his working day falls on Saturday. Before making the canvas to secure the necessary number of cows, a survey of the territory to be covered should be made, and unless the prospect of securing at least 480 cows is promising, the price should be \$1.25 per cow. If more cows owners could only get the penny pushed from their eye sufficiently far that they might see the dollar beyond, but just out of reach, the cost to span the gap would always be paid without hesitation.

As soon as the required number of cows has been signed for, a meeting for the completion of the organization is called at some convenient center; officers elected and by-laws adopted, suggestive form of which may be had by addressing A. J. Glover, Secretary of the Wisconsin State Dairyman's Association, Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin.

The next step is to secure a man to do the work, the nature of which is particular and exacting. The following qualifications of a tester are very desirable:

First—He should have had experience as a feeder and have made a special study of feeds and feeding.

Second—He should be quick and accurate at figures.

Third—He should be well informed and be willing to receive information.

Fourth—He should be patient, discreet, tactful, not talking too much.

Fifth—He should be clean, enthusiastic, energetic.

I say clean because he is to help the farmers along sanitary lines and is at the same time an example to a large number of boys whose thought should be so directed that the highest type of manhood will be developed. The efficiency of the tester will determine in large measure the success of the association.

Labor saving devices thought out by specialists for facilitating the work of bankers have been generally adopted. Likewise carefully worked out Milk and Feed Record Sheets and Record Books should be available to the farmer for keeping his records, and in helping him to help himself.

The College of Agriculture at Madison will gladly aid in preparing suitable blanks.

The Milk and Feed Record Book should contain in addition to the accepted ruling for the actual records, directions for taking samples for testing, how to figure results, etc.; also a brief presentation of the different constituents of feeds, explanation of terms used, and a few good rations. The care of the dairy herd and dairy score cards for both bull and cow are other features of importance. An Eau Claire County farmer said that he got more real help from such a Milk and Feed Record Book than he did from one of the standard works on Feeds and Feeding. The farmer's time for reading is limited. He wants the nub of the whole thing in a nut shell.

The work of the Cow Testing Association if faithfully carried out will result in "Making Each Cow Pay" and in making the business of dairying highly profitable in every way, because, first, it detects poor and unprofitable cows, concerning which little comment is necessary. One of our Short Course boys said, "They are the kind to sell to the fellow who thinks a cow is a cow; who thinks he can tell by looking at one how good she is and the per cent of fat in her milk, and who takes no stock in cow testing work." The report of the Douglas County (Nebraska) Cow Testing Association shows that the profit from the ten most profitable cows was \$1,032.88, and from the ten least profitable cows it was \$57.32.

There are doubtless one or more of the least profitable kind in nearly every herd. The Cow Testing Association will separate them out. No farmer can afford to spend his own time, pay high priced labor or maintain expensive milking machines to milk cows of this class. The \$100.00 kind for me.

Second, it determines the value of profitable cows and of the progeny of those cows. A prominent Wisconsin dairyman had priced one of his cows to a neighbor at \$150.00, but the neighbor refused to pay \$150.00, saying that that was too much money for a cow. After the cow had been in the test association for a year and her real value was known, this same neighbor came back and paid \$275.00 for the same cow. No longer will 300 or 400 pound cows be sold for common cow prices, or their progeny sold at veal prices, if their true value is known. \$125.00 pays for the testing of one's herd for several years.

Third, it helps the farmer to feed so as to get the greatest returns for every dollar's worth of feed fed. This is made possible by the tester giving to each member of the association the benefit of his experience as a feeder and his knowledge of the different kinds of feed. One of our best farmers sent the ration he was feeding his herd to the agricultural teacher in the local high school. By leaving out the barley and mixing the remaining parts of the ration in a different proportion the ration was nearly balanced and gave much better results at the pail. The actual saving was 8 cents on the feed of each cow per day. The farmer was feeding 22 cows.

$22 \times 8c = \$1.76$  saved per day.

$30 \times \$1.76 = \$52.80$  saved per month; (enough to pay for testing the herd for nearly two and one-half years) and to this amount must be added the returns from the increased milk flow. It is not unlikely that a competent tester could render as valuable service to a large number of our farmers who might be induced to take on the work.

Fourth, it raises the standard of production. Another successful dairyman who has kept a record of his herd for the past five years has found that by so doing the average annual butter fat production of each cow in his herd has been increased nearly 20 pounds for each year he had the cows under test. The average price of butter fat is 30 cents.

$20 \times 30c = \$6.00$  actual cash returned per cow per year, for testing. \$6.00 multiplied by the number of cows in your herd gives you the value of having them in the test association. On this basis if you have but three cows, you will be making 20 per cent interest on your investment, providing you pay \$15.00 per year for having the work done. That is the kind of investment for which I am looking. Many instances of an increase in milk production of 25 to 60 per cent in two years are on record.

Fifth, it raises the standard of the herd and the value of the individual animals because the heifers from high producing dams sired by pure bred sires of merit are sure to possess dairy quality which guarantees such animals profit makers and top-notchers when sold. In this connection the opportunity which the test association offers for proving which sires are capable of transmitting to their offspring dairy quality in a high degree cannot be too strongly emphasized. The very general practice of sending mature well bred bulls to the block when just in their prime for breeding purposes is detrimental to our dairy industry and should be stopped. The Cow testing Association solves the problem of proving sires. Keep proven sires of merit in service.

Sixth, it increases one's love for good cows, interests boys and girls in farm life and its possibilities, and induces reading and study on the part of its members. Better care, better barns, better equipment follow.

Seventh, the Cow Testing Association may be considered a Farmers' Club which is an organization of the people in any locality for the improvement of themselves, their homes, and their community. Regular monthly meetings benefit members socially, educationally and financially. Let us put Wisconsin first in the number of cow testing associations. Let us make her the unexcelled dairy center of the world, a leader socially and educationally.

Subject for March Bulletin: "The Work Horse in the Spring"