Selection of dairy heifers

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The best value is gained from fodder crops when they are strip grazed by the milking herd.

Rank growth which is also a cause of pasture deterioration the next year.

Better pastures the next season will result from closer grazing in late spring.

**Summer Fodder Crops**

Summer fodder crops are mostly sown during October. The land should be ploughed in August before the soil dries out and left under fallow until seeding.

Because rainfall cannot be relied on to assist germination and the surface soil is dry, deep seeding is essential.

To encourage quick germination and root penetration, Sudan grass should be sown 3 inches deep with a drill. A nitrogen fertiliser is recommended and to be effective should be drilled into the moist soil with the seed.

Sudan grass can be grazed when it is 15 inches high. If the growth is too rapid to be controlled by grazing, part of the crop should be cut for hay. This should be done when the flower stalks start to emerge.

To get the best value from fodder crops they should be strip grazed.

**SELECTION OF DAIRY HEIFERS**

The time is approaching on most dairy farms when a decision has to be made on which of the year's crop of heifers are to be retained. Replacements are needed not only to keep up herd numbers, but also to increase the average production. This is herd improvement—surely the aim of all dairy farmers.

With heifers especially, selection on physical characteristics alone is doubtful business. No system has yet been found which gives a positive correlation between physical features of heifers and their production possibilities.

By far the more reliable selection “tool” is the production records of near relatives of heifers.

If the records are available they will furnish valuable information not only about the probable productive capacity, but also about longevity, temperament and breeding regularity.

For this purpose the relatives may be placed in order of importance—

1. Full sisters.
2. Dam.
4. Aunts.
5. Cousins.

Selection of sound and reliable strains from which replacements can be made is necessary to maintain herd size and high average production.