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GRADE HERD RECORDING, 1962-63

By M. CULLITY, B.Sc. (Agric.), Chief, Dairying Division

A poor season coupled with a 16 per cent. increase in the number of cows tested during 1962-63 led to a drop in the average yields of cows in the Grade Herd Recording Scheme.

The average yields for the season were 571 gallons of milk, 236 pounds of butterfat with a test of 4.1 per cent. This year’s figure of 22,035 cows entered for testing was 4,500 more than last year and was 19.4 per cent. of all cows in the dairying districts.

### TABLE 1

#### AVERAGE PRODUCTION PER COW, 1933-63

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of cow lactations in average</th>
<th>Milk</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Butterfat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1933-34</td>
<td>4,308</td>
<td>415</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955-56</td>
<td>13,861</td>
<td>514</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957-58</td>
<td>14,085</td>
<td>549</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959-60</td>
<td>12,803</td>
<td>577</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960-61</td>
<td>13,988</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961-62</td>
<td>14,866</td>
<td>616</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962-63</td>
<td>17,258</td>
<td>571</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>236</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE**

For the years preceding 1955-56 the lactation was 273 days. From and including 1955-56 the lactation was 300 days.

### TABLE 2

#### NUMBER OF COWS AND HERDS IN UNITS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Cows in Dairying Area</th>
<th>Cows under test (includes B class and incomplete lactations)</th>
<th>Number of Herds Tested included in Average</th>
<th>Number of Units</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td></td>
<td>Number of Herds per Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933-34</td>
<td>74,900</td>
<td>4,308</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955-56</td>
<td>116,057</td>
<td>17,170</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>461</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957-58</td>
<td>116,191</td>
<td>16,207</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>460</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959-60</td>
<td>113,539</td>
<td>15,097</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960-61</td>
<td>110,120</td>
<td>16,570</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>409</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961-62</td>
<td>111,897</td>
<td>17,588</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>414</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962-63</td>
<td>113,943</td>
<td>22,035</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>467</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE**

For the years preceding 1955-56 the lactation was 273 days. From and including 1955-56 the lactation was 300 days.
The data showing the averages of intermittently-tested herds is not recorded here. However previous examinations have shown that the average yields of these herds has not improved and the money used in testing them could be wasted.

Time of Calving

The best time for calving depends on feed and management. Where herds are hand fed with silage, hay and concentrates, especially during the summer, there is little difference in yield according to the month of calving. Autumn calving has again been shown to give the best results where it is not profitable to feed concentrates and where milk and cream is sold for manufacturing purposes.

During 1962-63 it was only the cows which calved in March, April, May and June in these districts which yielded higher than the average of all cows.

Calving in the autumn allows the lactation period to fit in with the green pasture season and with supplementary feeding and hay and silage it enables the cows to be kept in milk for a reasonably long lactation.

Length of Lactation

The average length of lactation in 1962-63 was 7.8 months—the same as last year. There was a fall from 8.5 to 8.1 months in the milk zone and a slight rise from 7.4 to 7.5 months in the butterfat zone.

The overall improvement in the length of lactation is shown by the increasing number of cows completing either a nine or 10 months lactation. In 1955-56, 30.7 per cent. of the cows milked for nine or 10 months. In 1962-63 the percentage rose to 40.5.

The value of longer lactations is also demonstrated in another way. The average yield for cows which milked for 300 days was 775 gallons of milk and 326 pounds of butterfat compared with 571 gallons and 236 pounds of butterfat for all cows and only 215 pounds of butterfat for cows which did not complete 300 days.

The increase in herds and cows submitted for testing in the Grade Herd Recording Scheme points to a definite promise of greater efficiency in the future.
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