Breeding records for dairy cattle

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ANY business needs records to show up inefficiencies and to indicate where and/or when danger points are being reached.

One record which can be of much use to the dairy farmer is the cow breeding record.

A suitable type of record sheet is shown opposite.

This sheet should be kept in the dairy, pasted on thin cardboard and tacked on the wall. If this is done the record is available for use at all times. It is also a good idea to have a pencil tied nearby on a piece of string ready for immediate use.

Of the columns used, the question can be asked, why all this information? Some of it is self explanatory, such as name, breed, date of birth and sex of calf. This is general information required.

From the point of view of checks on fertility in relation to management factors, calving date and lactation number are important.

Fertility of cows is low soon after calving and cows having had more than six calves tend to be less fertile.

The section on "Pre-service Heats" is seldom used but can be of great help to farmers using the artificial breeding scheme.

If a note is made of heat periods soon after calving a check can be made to see if the animal is settling down to a regular cycle. If she is it may not be necessary to wait the full two months after calving before breeding the animal.

Alternatively if cycles are irregular veterinary attention can be sought.

One difficulty in A.B. schemes is the picking of animals in season. If the pre-service records are kept then these can be used to anticipate when the next oestrous will occur, say 19 to 24 days later. A closer watch can then be kept on the animal which has quiet oestruses.

Finally it will be noted that provision is made for noting the bull used at each mating. This is of particular interest to A.B. users but also for herds using more than one bull.

Fertility of bulls can vary and only by keeping a note of this information can a check be made on their performances.

- Records are a necessary part of management and can be used in an active manner rather than as a passive recording of what has happened on a property.