

# Service and Calving Records



## of Dairy Stock . . .

ON DAIRY FARMS OF ALL TYPES, the successful management of the dairy herd depends largely on the efficiency with which stock records are kept and used. The most important stock records from a management viewpoint are those concerned with service and calving.

Service and calving records can be conveniently recorded either in a suitably ruled notebook or on a large cardboard sheet that is pinned up in the milking shed. With either method, it is a sound plan to provide additional space on the shed sheet or in the notebook for the recording of particulars of individual cows and their calves. A suitable type of shed

sheet is illustrated in this bulletin. A similar type of sheet is issued by the Herd Recording Department of the New Zealand Dairy Board to all farmers who are testing their herds under the "Group System."

From the illustration it will be seen that the particulars of each cow which are handy to have summarised are the shed herd number, name, herd

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book number if she is a registered purebred, breed, tattoo number and age. Alongside each cow's name, calving and mating particulars can be recorded.

### CALVING RECORDS

The essential calving particulars of each cow are the calving date, condition at calving, initials of the sire of the calf, sex of the calf, and whether the calf was kept for rearing, sold for dairying or "bobbied." These details should be filled in daily as the cows calve.

There are three sound reasons for keeping accurate calving records. Firstly, in our New Zealand system of dairy husbandry, we rely primarily on pasture as the source of feed for our dairy stock. In order that the most efficient use can be made of pasture for milk and butterfat production, it is recommended that the herd be calved down four to six weeks before pasture growth commences in the spring; similarly, for autumn calvers, calving should take place in the March-April period so as to make most efficient use of the autumn flush of pasture growth, if any. To provide a check on the extent to which the management of individual herds conforms to this recommended practice, and to provide a basis for an improvement in the management of the herd if it is required, records of calving dates are essential.

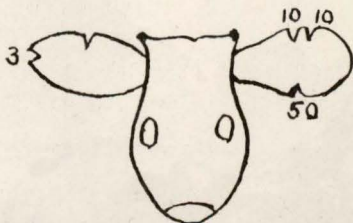
Secondly, if the production of the cows in the herd is being recorded, as, of course, it should be, by an official system of testing, accurate knowledge of calving dates is fundamental to the successful testing of the herd.

The third use to which calving records can be put is in connexion with the breeding of dairy cattle. If any breeding policy, however elementary, is being attempted, it is obviously fundamental to have particulars of the parentage and ages of the calves kept for rearing.

Calves are best identified as to parentage and age by means of an ear tattoo. The individual identification of grade heifer calves is a service provided, free of cost, to all testing members of Herd Improvement Associations. Under this scheme, the identification number of the calf is tattooed in the right ear. In the left ear is tattooed a letter indicating the season of birth of the calf, together with a letter indicating the association under whose jurisdiction the calf is identified.

For quick and accurate identifica-

tion of calves, a system of earmarkings may be adopted. A useful system is this: A nick out of the top of the right ear signifies 1, out of the tip of the right ear signifies 3, and out of the bottom of the right ear signifies 5. Nicks in the same relative positions on the left ear, signify 10, 30 and 50 respectively. Using this system, stock can be numbered up to 99. For example, calf number 74 would have two nicks out of the top, and one out of the bottom of the left ear, and one nick out of the top, and one out of the tip of the right ear.



### SERVICE RECORDS

On the right hand side of the shed sheet, details of mating should be noted. Provision is made for recording for each service, the month, the day, and the initials of the sire.

The keeping of mating details in this way has a big advantage over any other, in that a glance at the sheet will show which cows have not been noticed on heat at all and have consequently been missed.

If there is no shed sheet, mating data can also be kept in a notebook. The first page or two should be given over to a list of all cows to be mated. Three columns headed date of service, name of cow, and sire to whom mated, should be ruled in the following pages, and entries made as the cows are mated. A line can be ruled, or a space left, after each day's entries. When a cow returns to the bull a line can be drawn through the previous entry. The entries in the book will then show the last date of service for any particular animal.

It is more difficult checking up on cows that may have missed service altogether when the book is used and not the shed sheet. Reference has to be made to the list of cows in the first few pages of the book and their names carefully checked off with the mating entries. This should be done every three weeks and the cows that have not been served watched closely for signs of heat.

The notebook, however, affords a handy method of checking up on the dates cows are due to return. Daily

SEASON.

1949-50

## SHED SHEET

SIRE

INITIALS OF BULL	NAME	BREED	H.B. NO.
L. R.	Lincoln Kollo	Jersey	6789
L. S.	Lincoln Syd	Jersey	9876

PARTICULARS OF COW					PARTICULARS OF CALVES							PARTICULARS OF MATING DATES OF SERVICE								IN CALF TO	DUE TO CALVE				
SHED NO.	NAME	H.B. NO.	BREED	TATTOO NO.	AGE	BORN	SIRE	SEX	FATE	IDENTI- FICATION	DATE	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN			JUL	AUG		
1	L. Buttercup	12345	J	42	4	15/8/49	L. R.	F	Reared	64	—	<sup>12</sup> L. S.												L. S.	21/8/50
2	Tulip	Grade	JX	56	3	17/8/49	L. S.	M	Bobbed		24/8/49	<sup>13</sup> L. R.	<sup>3</sup> L. R.											L. R.	11/9/50
3	Pansy	"	JX	17	8	18/8/49	L. R.	M	"		24/8/49	<sup>13</sup> L. S.	<sup>3</sup> L. S.											L. S.	11/9/50
4	Whiskers	"	JX	12	8	22/8/49	L. R.	F	Reared	65	—	<sup>2</sup> L. R.												L. R.	6/8/50



reference to the entries 19-23 days back will show which cows are due to return and a close watch can be kept on them for any signs of heat. It takes a little longer to get this information from the shed sheet as a very careful scrutiny of it is required.

An advantage of the shed sheet is that cows which are returned to the bull and are difficult to settle can be picked at a glance. This information can be brought forward in the notebook by marking with, say, an "R" or "2R", indicating return or second return to the bull. If dirty, such cows should be washed out before service, or if necessary, treated by a veterinary surgeon for female sterility.

Whichever method of recording is adopted, the entries should be made immediately after service, and before leaving the shed. To this end, a pencil should always be kept tied to the shed sheet or notebook.

It is a good idea to start recording heat periods some time before the mating season actually starts. The days on which cows are due are then known and a close watch can be kept to ensure they are not missed. This applies in particular to cows which previous experience has indicated are

difficult to catch in season.

The shed sheet contains a final column; the date the cows are due to calve. With the notebook system, another list must be made out for this as the notebook by this time is usually rather mutilated. The calving dates can be drawn up any time after the conclusion of the mating season. A "breeding table" to enable this to be done quickly is included here.

Mating records are of great importance. There is no quicker way to trouble on a dairy farm than to be landed in confusion with calving dates. It is only by keeping the records that an immediate check is possible on the fertility of both the bulls and the cows. Appropriate steps can then be taken to ensure as many cows as possible calve to time.

The dates the cows are due to calve is also valuable information. Suitable provision for feed in the spring can be made; the date to bring individual cows handy to the shed for calving is known; and when cows are being considered for culling, the date they are due to calve is a factor of some importance to be taken into account.

#### BREEDING TABLE FOR DAIRY COWS

Final date of service	Due to calve	Final date of service	Due to calve	Final date of service	Due to calve
Jan. 1	Oct. 10	Apr. 30	Feb. 6	Sep. 3	Jun. 12
8	17	May 7	13	10	19
15	24	14	20	17	26
22	31	21	27	24	Jul. 3
29	Nov. 7	28	Mar. 6	Oct. 1	10
Feb. 5	14	Jun. 4	13	8	17
12	21	11	20	15	24
19	28	18	27	22	31
26	Dec. 5	25	Apr. 3	29	Aug. 7
Mar. 5	12	Jul. 2	10	Nov. 5	14
12	19	9	17	12	21
19	26	16	24	19	28
26	Jan. 2	23	May 1	26	Sep. 4
Apr. 2	9	30	8	Dec. 3	11
9	16	Aug. 6	15	10	18
16	23	13	22	17	25
23	30	20	29	24	Oct. 2
		27	Jun. 5	31	9

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