



Executive Secretary
David Kendall

THOUGHTS

From The Secretary

Public speaking is a frightening thing. The opportunity to make a fool of oneself always presents. What is even of greater concern is if you represent an important idea that is misunderstood. One can only look to oneself for the error and pronounce a public mea culpa. With chagrin I now do so.

At the convention last summer when I discussed the new score card, I gave the impression that both myself and the scorecard favored toady, round posted, tight ribbed no milk sows lacking all semblance of dairy character or the appearance of profitable, economic milk production. Basically, I gave the perception of promoting beef cows incapable of feeding their own calf. As a number of people have told me the same thing, all I can do is beg your forgiveness and restate myself.

What I had attempted to say is (quoting from the Top Acres/Stam-Mar-Dale Express ad in the February Bulletin, many thanks to them for stating the concept succinctly) "Strength without compromising dairyness." Or, in another word, balance. That word, balance, is the unifying concept behind the new scorecard. Balance of dairy quality with strength and substance. Balance of width of chest and depth of heart with an angular dairy shoulder. Balance of substance with a clean, flat cut bone. Balance of width of muzzle with a feminine head and long lean neck. Balance, balance and more balance.

With the above I must stress however, that the new scorecard will penalize those cows that lack strength or dairyness. It will be particularly harsh on those animals lacking both. We do not need to breed draft animals, nor do we need to breed fluff that blows away in a gentle breeze. What we do need to breed are balanced cattle that will produce large quantities of high component low somatic cell milk for a decade or longer. (And yes I did write decade, always thinking Ivetta.)

Let us take a close look at one of the new categories this month. What are we looking at in Strength and Substance? The primary focus of this category is overall body constitution and

balance. We focus on traits that have a positive correlation to health and vigor and how they impact longevity. In the new score card 15% of final score is assigned to this breakdown. Of this the largest weight, 6%, is on strength.

What are we focusing on in strength? The first area we look at is the depth and width of chest floor. The second area in strength is a deep heart girth with a well sprung fore rib blending into the shoulders. This is followed by bone mass, strong without coarseness. The last element in strength is a muzzle that is broad with large open nostrils and a strong jaw.

The second part of Strength and Substance is the front end. Weighed at 5%, we are looking for shoulder blades and elbows that are set against the body wall. We are also looking for fullness through the crop. What this means in scoring a cow is, an animal that is wide and powerful through the front of her body but is lacking structural correctness and style will be penalized.

The third part of Strength and Substance weighing in at 4% of final score is size. Size is a measurement of the volumetric capacity of the cow that is arrived at by length times width times height. Please note the last part, height. Height is another word for stature. Another misconception for which I am responsible is that tall cows will be penalized in the new scorecard. Let me be clear on this point, tall, narrow front ended, pinched heart, wing shouldered, shallow ribbed tube steaks will be penalized with the new card. In that particular case, stature will have a negative impact on balance and the cow will not receive credit for being a brown bovine beanpole. On the other hand, if she is well-balanced with proportionate height at the withers and hips, stature will only add to her score as total volume increases.

What does the above mean in practical application? Let us look at three different cows. The first is a brown hippo through whose front legs you could run a pregnant sow. There is no doubt that this cow has strength and volume.

However, being coarse boned, round shouldered lacking any semblance of blending or balance this cow does not score as high as one may think. If she is given a 92 for strength (losing a bit for coarseness of bone) and a 94 for volume (she is a big bruiser) but a 75 for Front End what does she score for Strength and Substance? Take $92 \times .40 = 36.8$, $94 \times .26 = 24.4$ and $75 \times .33 = 24.8$, add the products we get 86 for this breakdown. Please note this cow loses points on style.

The second is a tall, narrow chested cow that a chipmunk could not find room to raise a family in. For strength she scores a 68. With winged elbows and open shoulders the most you can give the front end is a 70. While tall and long this cow has little width to speak of. In this case her stature is not a positive as there is no balance of width. She gets a 72 for size. The end result is $68 \times .40 = 27.2$, $70 \times .26 = 18.2$ and $72 \times .33 = 23.8$, add the products and we get 69.2 or 69 for Strength and Substance.

The last cow is a beautiful balanced with adequate strength and clean front end. While lacking the width of chest and depth of heart of the first cow, she is cleaner boned with a nice, wide muzzle. As chest and heart are the most important element in this category, she does not score as high as the first cow, but she still gains an 88 for strength. In the front end this cow excels, full through the crops with a shoulder that blends into the body wall harmoniously. For front end she gains a 94. In size this cow is not as tall as either of the first two. However, she is well sprung with plenty of depth through both the fore and rear rib. Again, while lacking the sheer volume of the first cow, she has considerably more than the second and receives a 88 for size. How does she score in the category? $88 \times .4 = 35.2$, $88 \times .26 = 22.9$ and $94 \times .33 = 31$, add the products and we get 89 points for Strength and Substance.

In the next issue we will continue our exploration of the new card. Till then, we leave you with the long lived, early calving, highly productive Brown cow with the low somatic cell...Brown Swiss. Dave