Executive Secretary
David Kendall

THOUGHTS From The Secretary

For the last year your Board, Type Committee, Genetics Committee, members of the A.I. industry, University personnel and staff have been working on a new score card to propel the great Brown Swiss cow forward over the next 10 years. This work is based on real world data that looks at productive, profitable life combined with appreciation of style. The current work in progress is published here for your consideration and review. Please let us know your thoughts.

MAJOR TRAIT DESCRIPTIONS

There are five major classification traits on which a classifier bases a cow's score. Each trait is broken down into body parts to be looked at and ranked.

1) Udder – 40%

Udder traits receive the highest score card emphasis. Traits that contribute to high milk yield and a long productive life in Brown Swiss receive major consideration. Listed in priority order, descriptions of the traits to be considered are as follows:

Udder Depth – moderate depth relative to the hock with adequate capacity and clearance. Consideration is given to lactation number and age.

Fore Udder – firmly attached with moderate length and ample capacity.

Rear Udder – wide and high, firmly attached with uniform width from top to bottom and fullness at the base of the rear udder where it turns to become the udder floor.

Teat Placement – squarely placed under each quarter, plumb and properly spaced from side and rear views.

Teats – cylindrical shape and uniform size with medium length and diameter.

Udder Cleft – evidence of a strong median suspensory ligament indicated by adequately defined halving.

Udder Balance and Texture – should exhibit an udder floor that is level as viewed from the side. Quarters should be evenly balanced; soft pliable and well collapsed after milking.

2) Mobility – 20%

The structure and movement of feet, pasterns and legs are evaluated. Evidence of mobility receives major consideration. Listed in priority order, the descriptions of the traits to be considered are as follows:

Movement – free and comfortable; able to rise and lie down easily.

Feet - steep angle and deep heel with short, well rounded, closed toes.

Legs:

Front and Rear Legs – tracking straight, wide apart with feet squarely placed.

Rear Legs - Side View – a moderate set (angle) to the hock.

Hocks – cleanly molded, free from coarseness and puffiness with adequate flexibility.

Thurl Position – centrally placed between the hip bones and pin bones.

Pasterns – short, strong and flexible.

3) Strength and Substance – 15%

Overall body constitution and balance are evaluated. Traits that positively impact health and vigor receive major consideration. Listed in priority order, the descriptions of the traits to be considered are as follows:

Strength:

Chest – deep and wide floor.

Heart Girth – deep and with well sprung fore ribs blending into the shoulders.

Bone Mass – strong without coarseness.

Muzzle – broad with large open nostrils and a strong jaw.

Front End:

Shoulder Blades and Elbows – firmly set against the chest wall.

Crops - full.

Size - The volumetric measurement of the capacity of the cow, (length x width x height) is evaluated with age and breed size recommendations taken into consideration. Height at the withers and hips should be relatively proportionate.

4) Dairy Quality – 15%

The physical evidence of milking ability is evaluated. Listed in priority order, the descriptions of the traits to be considered are as follows:

Ribs – rib bones are wide apart, flat, well sprung, and slanted toward the rear.

Bone – flat and clean with adequate substance.

Body Condition – appropriate for the stage of lactation.

Breed Characteristics - overall style, strength and balance. Head should be feminine, with a long lean neck blending into a long body.

5) Rump – 10%

Provides core support for reproductive efficiency, a healthy udder and the rear feet and legs. Adequate width throughout the rump promotes calving ease and breeding efficiency. Listed in priority order, the descriptions of the traits to be considered are as follows:

Rump – pins should be adequately spaced and slightly lower (2 inches) than hip bones; rump should be long and wide. Tail head is set slightly above and neatly between pin bones, and the tail is free from coarseness.

Thurl Width – needs to be widely spaced and lower than the hip bones and pin bones.

Back - should be straight and strong; the loin-broad, strong, and nearly level.

Vulva - is nearly vertical and the anus should not be recessed.

Many thanks to Chris Keim of Sunshine Genetics and Brian Voegeli of Voegeli Farms for providing the classes for the successful PDCA Judging Conference in Madison on April 8. The great quality cattle that Chris and Brian brought that morning were a credit to the Brown Swiss breed. The volunteering of their cattle, money and time underscores the faith of the membership in the Brown Swiss breed.

Another great program that is being developed by volunteers is the Brown Swiss History project. Headed by Bernard Monsen with John Anderson, Russ Geisy, George Harris, Velva Notter and Dr. Roger Netizel serving as members. Please contact Bernard with ideas and suggestions. Till next time with the profitable, low somatic cell cow…Brown Swiss. Dave