



**Executive Secretary
David Kendall**

THOUGHTS

From The Secretary

There are many unsung heroes in the US Dairy industry. An important element that many producers are not truly aware of is the Animal Improvement Production Laboratory of the United States Department of Agriculture (AIPL). Under the leadership of Dr. Duane Norman this group performs the herculean task of processing and producing production evaluations for all breeds for the US as well as coordinating international cooperation through Interbull. AIPL also does the type evaluations for the color breeds including Brown Swiss.

One of the key jobs of AIPL is to update the Net Merit, Cheese Merit and Fluid Merit models. These numbers are management tools that allow you as a producer to select bulls that will bring the most profitable lifetime production in your particular milk market. The models vary significantly in their weights on milk, fat and protein. As an example, Net Merit places no value on fluid milk, Cheese Merit places a negative value on fluid milk and Fluid Merit places a high value on fluid milk. The main model the industry utilizes is Net Merit. Led by Dr. Paul VanRaden, these models are being updated for the August proofs. Interestingly, the new Productive Life model will also be launched in August.

Productive Life plays a larger role in the new Net Merit model, moving from 11% in 2003 to 17% in 2006. Since being introduced in July, 1994 productive life has been calculated on lactations up to 305 days in length and maximum age of cow of 84 months. In other words Productive Life did not include

any record longer than 305 days or records produced after a cow reached 7 years of age. The new model includes all records to 999 days regardless of the age of the cow. The new model also includes, for the first time, a weight on death loss; if a cow died instead of being sent to market in the past, the loss of value was not accounted for. It will be interesting to watch how this impacts for bulls and breeds in which there is a problem with daughter effect calving difficulty or metabolic disorders. In case you have been wondering, Productive Life is where value is placed on cull cow income.

However, the largest shift in Net Merit comes on the protein/fat ratio. Since 1984 protein has carried a higher value in Net Merit than fat. In the 2003 model protein carried a weight of 33% while fat was valued at 23%. After extensive review of milk markets, Dr. VanRadens group has determined that protein and fat are, in fact, of equal worth for Net Merit calculations. Therefore, beginning in August each will carry a weight of 23%. The results will be some reshuffling of all breed's bulls on a Net Merit basis. Bulls that are higher in fat than protein will tend to move up, bulls higher in protein than fat will tend to move down. The 6% shift in Productive Life and extended data in the new model may result in some further movement. In our current PTI Model there may also be some re-ranking of bulls from the Productive Life changes.

BSCBA feels that these changes are positive for the Brown Swiss breed as well as the US dairy industry. As times go forward

and refinements of existing analysis is combined with ongoing research into new areas, the system will continue to provide the best tools to improve the great Brown Swiss cow. Thank you from BSCBA to AIPL for all their unsung efforts on all of our behalves.

Welcome to IOWA

Iowa is the Field of Dreams for many things including Brown Swiss. Industry and breed-leading production can be found along with Superior type that draws world attention. Located in the middle of the state is Iowa State University, a leading research center renown for its efforts in many fields that, in cooperation with South Dakota State and others, will play a principal role in the advancement of the Brown Swiss breed.

As a state, Iowa has produced leadership for BSCBA including past presidents George Opperman, Bernard Monson and Lee Barber. Iowa has also contributed a number of Brown Swiss employees over the years; three of whom have been honored and humbled to serve as Executive Secretary. Iowa is also the boyhood home of John Wayne, the Bridges of Madison County, the only place to find real 'Iowa Chops' and, of course, the great city of Dubuque.

A big thank you to the crew who have labored to produce this year's convention. Your efforts are greatly appreciated by all. We hope to see you July 12 to 15th as we look forward to a great future with the long lived, profitably Brown cow with the low somatic cell--- Brown Swiss. Dave