

Review of Government Herd Recording

Contributed by the Dairy Division

AFTER having introduced systematic cow testing and sponsored its development since its inception, the Government withdrew from active participation in this work at 31 July 1951, from which date the New Zealand Dairy Board assumed responsibility for the administration of the herd-recording services of the Dominion. Thus ended a continuous supervisory association dating from the 1890's, when experiments in the testing of whole herds by the Babcock test were carried out by a Government Dairy Instructor, and from 1909, when the Department of Agriculture introduced the systematic testing of dairy herds on a district or "association" basis.

TO foster the district system the Department conducted free of cost a number of what were termed illustration associations to show dairy farmers how the work could be done and to educate them in the value and importance of herd testing. The first association was organised at Dalefield, in the Wairarapa, and during succeeding years the movement was extended from district to district until almost every dairy-farming district of any importance was catered for, from Whangarei in the north to Stirling in the south. The association system, under which the owner takes his own milk weights and samples, was used mainly because it is economical and cheap, and it was quite satisfactory when dairy farmers were concentrating on herd building and were little interested in the selling of dairy stock.

Certificate-of-Record Test

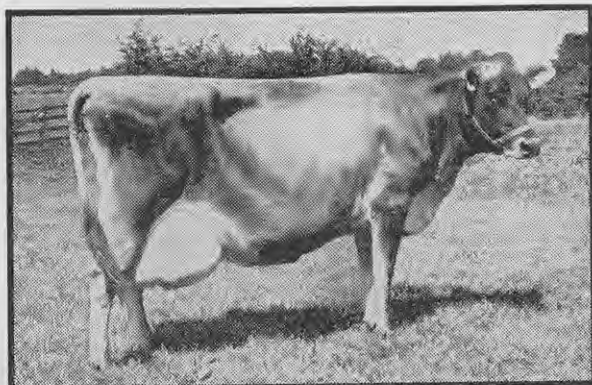
The introduction of the Certificate-of-Record test in 1912 marked the beginning of a special service for breeders of pedigree dairy cattle. In addition to providing an authentic record of production, it drew attention to the special advantages of using a pedigree herd sire and a pedigree foundation dam in herd improvement. In time the C.O.R. system was developed to a high standard of reliability and went much further than the

association system, as it provided for, among other things, a record of the daily milk weights of each cow on test, the checking of milk yields and taking of samples by an independent person, and a check on dates of calving. The costs of the C.O.R. test were necessarily high. It entailed much recording work for the herd owner and it was principally an individual cow test.

Official Herd Test

The Government Official Herd Test (O.H.T.), introduced in 1927 as an adjunct of the C.O.R. test, was a simplified C.O.R. test and completed the testing requirements of pedigree breeders. It retained the more important authenticity safeguards of the C.O.R. system, but relieved the owner of recording the daily milk weights and also dispensed with calving qualifications.

The O.H.T. was primarily intended for a herd test. Breeders were recommended to use it for this purpose, which the low fees were designed to encourage. However, most breeders persisted in using it as an individual cow test, and only in the last few years, when other factors began to operate, was there any real trend toward the entry of whole herds under O.H.T. by pedigree breeders.



[*"New Zealand Farmer" photo.*
Horowhenua Lady Acora, tested by W. G. Gust, Rongotea, has the highest 305-day C.O.R. record for all breeds of 906.94lb. of fat at the age of 3 years and 353 days. She also has a C.O.R. 365-day record of 1065.36lb. of fat as a 4-year-old.

Summary of Results

For many years annual summaries of C.O.R. results were published in "The Journal of Agriculture" in considerable detail. Staffing difficulties forced the abandonment of the preparation of these summaries some years ago, and even now it has not been possible to complete them year by year for past years. However, breeders have received certificates for all cows that have qualified, and a copy of each certificate has been supplied to the breeders' association concerned. In addition, breeders' associations have received each year production summaries under age classes, particulars of class leaders, and other details, and have publicised them. The Friesian and Jersey Associations issue them annually in booklet form.

The previous C.O.R. summary was published in the "Journal" for November and December 1944 and covered results for 1941, 1942, and 1943. The tables on this and the opposite pages summarise the more important results of the intervening years, and with comparable tables previously published constitute a general survey from the beginning of C.O.R. testing to the end of 1950.

First-class Certificates Issued to the End of 1950

Breed	Totals to 31/12/43	1944	1945	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	Totals to 31/12/50
YEARLY (365-DAY) DIVISION									
Jersey	10,880	431	432	418	554	392	264	222	13,593
Friesian	2,581	31	48	40	53	52	38	48	2,891
Milking Shorthorn	572	3	2	9	9	7	11	7	620
Ayrshire	262	4	2	2	3	1	2	1	277
Totals	14,295	469	484	469	619	452	315	278	17,381
305-DAY DIVISION									
Jersey	983	177	274	323	524	530	575	489	3,875
Friesian	80	15	24	14	39	42	45	45	304
Milking Shorthorn	19	7	12	4	10	7	4	11	74
Ayrshire	10	5	4	5	6	6	13	14	63
Totals	1,092	204	314	346	579	585	637	559	4,316



[*Green and Hahn Photography Ltd. photo.*
Lauderdale Regina Primrose, tested by Fiecken Brothers, Tai Tapu, has the highest C.O.R. figure for a Friesian of 1201.88lb. of fat in 365 days as a mature cow.