

The Dexter Bulletin

official publication of the American Dexter Cattle Association



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Election Results

The final results for regional director elections are as follows:

Region 1

John Knoche — 26 votes

Region 2

Anna Poole — 14 votes

Region 3

Mark Youngs — 13 votes

Region 4

Carol Ann Traynor — 15 votes

Region 5

Allyn Nelson*

* Total vote count unavailable.

All candidates ran unopposed and were victorious. Congratulations!



Region 6 Spring Meeting

April 28th and 29th

Stillwater, Oklahoma

Contact Marvin Johnson, Region 6
Director, for more information.



Cover photo: Twin heifers born to Shome Christal 5-2-2000 — Little Sheba and Reba. Photograph courtesy of Harry and Sue Newbold.

Message From The President

Here we are...the beginning of spring already! I'm sure everyone has seen enough winter, and is eager for the weather to change.

There are lots of things that Dexter enthusiasts can look forward to...spring calving (we're expecting 16 calves in April), updating color records (is your prize animal red or dun?), making sure your herd records are updated and sent to Rosemary for inclusion in the annual Herd Book, assisting in the bulldog research project by providing specimens for evaluation, preparing for the Annual meeting, and on and on. Being a Dexter owner and active member of our Association can provide each of us with a number of things to be involved with.

Plans continue to progress for the Annual Meeting in New York. The earlier timeframe this year may allow us to avoid the extreme heat and humidity that we encountered last year. Please plan to attend if possible; an advantage of having the meeting move around the country is the chance to attend it when it comes to your area. I hope many members plan to exhibit their stock in the Show and Sale — the more animals exhibited, the better chance to observe the variations inherent in our breed.

Our Association faces a number of interesting challenges as it continues to grow and evolve. We are continuing to change and improve, as evidenced by the information now found on the web page. We have established a good system for color determination, and are now able to truly identify red animals. We are putting together the new annual edition, which includes the breeders' directory and farm advertising. We are trying to establish a classification system, although it has had a rough start. I'm confident that the Science Committee will evaluate the feedback it has received and will work to continuously improve the system.

As I've stated in the past, I'm very proud of the things our Association has accomplished. But, we haven't finished the job, and I'm sure there are things that we can do better. We need to do a better job of listening to the membership, and I want to challenge the members to help me — and the rest of the officers and directors — by offering constructive criticism and new ideas to some of the nagging concerns that affect the Association. Together we can make a positive difference.

Patrick Mitchell
ADCA President

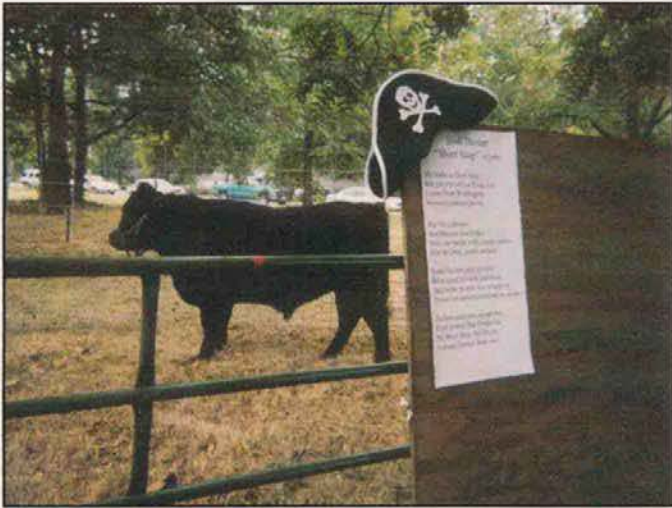
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Deadline for Summer 2001 Issue

• May 1st •

Short Stop, a Dexter



Short Stop and poem.



Visitors curried Short Stop...



...And looked at Short Stop and visited with Starr about Dexters.



But sometimes Short Stop said (with actions), "I need a break!"



Sometimes there were breaks between visitors.



Back home. "Ah, glad that's over."

Short Stop, a Dexter

by Starr Walkup

I decided to buy some Dexters because of their legendary sweet temperament and small size and dual purpose. I got my first ones in February of the year 2000. I (being scared of horns) set about to find a polled bull. My search took me to Washington state, but the transport brought a price tag that was over my comfort zone, so I decided to "distribute" the cost by purchasing several animals. In the end, my deal was to receive 4 animals, a bull, a cow and bull calf, and a steer. This deal took some time to conclude and then the trip took additional. The animals arrived in late May after an extra week of uprootedness (caused by a truck breakdown in California). The seller of the steer had fallen for his personality and had already trained him to petting and currying, so I was hoping to exhibit him as a prime example of a Dexter. When he arrived and got off the truck and into my barnlot, he kicked up his heels like a rodeo bull, so glad to be on terra firma! At least that was my interpretation. He definitely had personality!

However, my animals were not to have the happiest fate. Little did I know at that time how important a factor stress was to cattle. These animals were thrown together in Washington without the steer knowing the others, then they had a long trip (with extra delay), then they arrived in Missouri to a foreign farm and other new animals (though I kept them separated for a couple of weeks), and alas apparently encountered Missouri insects and diseases. They promptly came down with pinkeye (except for the milk-fed baby bull, who waited a few months to get it at weaning time). My vet put patches on the affected eyes, injected penicillin into the eyelids and gave each a shot of LA-200, all the accepted practices (though I had wanted to avoid antibiotics and raise my cattle organically, or at least "naturally"). I bought kelp and mineral with vitamins A, D, and E added. I called the university vet clinic and read up in everything I could find. I made

sure the pasture was clipped. The animals had it first in the one eye and then proceeded to get it in the second after I hoped they would have developed some immunity/resistance. By the time Labor Day rolled around, the bull had healed pretty well with only a spot in one eye, the cow looked like she would get away without permanent damage, and the baby bull had healed without any visible effect. But the steer, Short Stop, was blind in the first eye affected (the vet said that he thought the eye had just receded temporarily under the patch, but that hasn't proved to be the case) and the pinkeye was actively involved in the second eye. Actually, the university vet said, the pinkeye itself was probably over, but the body's reaction can take a long time to resolve. As you may remember, I envisioned Short Stop as my exhibition Dexter — such a cute and stoically sweet animal! My FFA

neighbor boys who had been interested in helping me (a single female) show him in a parade and started with the halter breaking had lost interest when they realized he was likely to be blind.

But Short Stop and I — "never say die!" When a local family who showed big animals for 4-H offered to load us up, Short Stop was on his way to the Labor Day local "homecoming" (small town fair-like event). If he couldn't be in the parade, he could be in the petting zoo! So that's what we did! (The trials of getting there are another story, but you

can see by the pictures that we made it.)

Rather than hide the effects of his pinkeye, I used a pirate theme (intended to make an eyepatch, but with bathing, etc., just didn't get it done; had a borrowed pirate hat to put on the fence...) and had this poem on the gate:

Irish Dexter, Short Stop (9/2000)

*My name is Short Stop,
But you c'n call me Pirate Zee.
I came from Washington.
Missouri pinkeye got me.*

*But I'm a Dexter,
And Dexters love folks!
Make me happy with a curry comb--
Give me long, gentle strokes.*

*Some Dexters pull as oxen.
We're good for milk and meat,
And some people like to keep us
'Cause our personalities are so sweet.*

*I'm here and you can pet me,
Even lookin' like Pirate Zee.
I'm Short Stop, the Dexter,
A proud Dexter, that's me!*

Kids came by to look and pet and curry, and local farmers came by to see! Short Stop is back in his pasture now and is helping some of his comrades learn to be calm, people-friendly animals. ❖

This isn't the first time Short Stop has been mentioned in the Bulletin; he was the calf delivered via C Section on April 21, 1998 per the request of Fred Chesterley. A story about The Side Delivery Cow can be found in the May/June 1998 Dexter Bulletin (Vol. 38, Issue 3).

The Changing U.S. Cattle Industry

by Drew Conroy

This article appeared in the ALBC News (July-August, 1998 - Vol. 15, Issue 4) and is reprinted with the kind permission of the American Livestock Breeds Conservancy, PO Box 477, Pittsboro, NC 27312.

America has become a society of specialists. Our jobs are specialized, and the purchases we make are no longer made in general stores but specialty markets and retail outlets. Our farms and livestock have also become specialized. Farmers choose the breeds they can most easily capitalize on. Consumers choose products that are the best value for their dollar. These economic forces have changed the cattle industry and the distribution of breeds within it.

As the beef and dairy cattle industries have become more specialized, farmers and ranchers have been able to produce more product per animal with greater efficiency than ever before. The cattle industry has not yet been transformed by the vertical integration now seen in poultry and swine; these industries are dominated by carefully controlled, hybrid lines (not breeds) of high producing "specialty" animals that produce uniform animal products at unbelievably low prices. The resulting corporate control of genetics which has occurred in poultry and swine is not yet a problem for cattle producers. But beef and dairy cattle breeds have become victims of changing markets and attitudes of a growing non-agricultural population. The term dual-purpose cattle applies to so few cattle breeds that it has become essentially irrelevant in North America.

Historical changes

Most cattle producers in North America used to be generalists, and all cattle were dual or triple-purpose animals. Cattle were essential to the success of early colonists, because they were large enough to defend themselves from most predators, and they were able to convert locally grown, relatively poor forage into leather, tallow, milk, meat, manure, and draft power - probably in



Drew with American Milking Devon Tom, while shooting the 20th Century Fox Movie, *The Crucible*, in 1995.

that order of importance. Similar to what is seen in developing nations around the globe today, our early breeds and varieties of cattle filled many roles in rural society. They were important animals, adapted to the local environment in which they were raised and able to provide an income source and products valuable to their owners.

As the West was settled and railroads sprouted up around the nation, the cattle industry began to change. Larger, more specialized beef and dairy farms began to capitalize on the ease of transporting cattle and their products. With the beginning of the industrial era, a readily available market in urban areas swelled. Producers bought, transported, and used new breeds to better meet the available market niches.

The middle to late 1800's brought an influx of more improved and specialized European breeds. This allowed progressive producers many more genetic options rather than getting by with whatever was available locally. The "new" dairy and beef breeds and their respective industries emerged. The dual or triple purpose breeds began their downward slide in population. Many of

them are rare today.

The dairy industry

Worldwide there are about 1,196,000,000 head of cattle alive today. Approximately 11.3% or 135,643,000 of them are dairy animals (FAO 1997). The remaining 88.7% are kept for meat, religious or cultural reasons. Nearly 300,000,000 cattle are used for draft purposes. Dairy farmers in much of the developed world produce more milk with fewer cows than at any time in history. Unfortunately, for those in the developing world who are most in need of milk, global milk production has dropped in at least five of the last seven years, while human populations continue their upward spiral.

In 1850, according to the agricultural census of the United States, there were approximately 18,379,000 total head of cattle, with about one-third of these animals being used for milk. Nearly every family had a cow, and agriculture was an important part of every village and town. Over time, villages grew into towns, towns into cities, and cities into megalopolises, and this changed the nature of agriculture. Total cattle numbers in the United States

The Changing U.S. Cattle Industry

peaked at 140,200,000 head in 1975, with only ten percent of these animals being used for milk. Today there are fewer than 112,000,000 head of cattle in this country, with only 8.4% in the national dairy herd (USDA:NASS, 1997). These animals are producing more milk per head than was imaginable 50 years ago. In 1995, a Holstein cow named Bell-Jr Rosabel-ET from Colorado broke the previous world record for milk production by producing 60,380 pounds (7,021 gallons) of milk in 365 days.

Agriculture writer William Bunting stated, "Considering that nature intended for a cow to produce only enough milk to raise her calf (about 3,000 pounds), successful dairy cows are all freaks of nature, and the Holstein is the freak of freaks..." (Bunting 1989).

This trend of more milk per cow and fewer total cows reflects the progress made in the dairy industry through genetics, nutrition, and management. The dairy industry has become so specialized that the Holstein, hardly known in this country 150 years ago, now dominates the dairy industry. (See Figure 1.) Holsteins are dominant to such a degree that people sometimes wonder what happened to the "brown cows."

As Holsteins dominate the dairy industry, breeds like the Milking Shorthorn and the Brown Swiss are struggling to keep their population numbers at viable levels. The result has

been an increase in crossbreeding the dairy industry. This is called Genetic Expansion and Grade-Up programs in the Milking Shorthorn breed and Identity Enrollment in the case of the Brown Swiss breed. Opening herdbooks has allowed Holstein genetics and hopefully higher milk production to filter its way in. According to one Milking Shorthorn breeder, "Anyone who cares about the breed uses EXP or crossbred animals in their herd." What is done in the name of breed viability today, however, may not be so good for a breed's future.

Recently there has been little crossbreeding in the U.S. dairy industry. Unlike swine and poultry breeders, who have capitalized on hybrid vigor, dairy producers in the United States have been reluctant to crossbreed. This is because milk production does not respond to crossbreeding as do fertility and growth rate, and the offspring rarely produce more milk than the better parent line (Schmidt et al. 1988). In the dairy industry this has meant that anything crossed with a Holstein will generally produce less milk than the Holstein parent line. While crossing less productive breeds with Holsteins results in more milk production than the original breed and immediate income for the farmer, another result is the loss of the genetic diversity as represented by pure breeds in the industry. As historian Bruce Kalk, a presenter at the 1997 ALBC Annual Meeting in Shelburne,

Vermont, pointed out, "at least a half dozen once prominent swine breeds were lost in America through crossbreeding."

These cows - now rare breeds - are an important reserve for future changes in the dairy industry and must be conserved.

(Ironically, crossbreeding of Holsteins to Ayrshires, Jerseys, Brown Swiss, and other breeds to improve grazing ability, fertility, and other qualities relevant to grass-based dairying in the offspring does work because these characteristics are more readily heritable. but grass-based dairying is a topic for another day.)

At the same time, dairy farm numbers across the country are declining. There is a clear trend toward fewer, larger farms. According to the USDA, "almost one in four dairy herds have disappeared since 1991, a 5% decrease per year. Combined with the decline in cow numbers, the result has been nearly a 25% increase in average herd size." Today, 35% of the nation's dairy cows can be found in herds with 200 or more cows (USDA-APHIS 1996). This can be explained in part by an aging dairy farmer population, but primarily by the economics of trying to produce milk for the masses given fluctuating market prices. To some degree dairy farming has also become regionalized, as farmers position themselves in areas of high milk prices and low feed and land prices. While they have not become regionalized to the degree of poultry and swine producers, the trend toward regionalization is not without risks of regional feed shortages and increased transportation costs.

The dairy industry has become more specialized. This has meant more technology, less labor, more milk per cow, and fewer cows, especially "brown cows." These cows - now rare breeds - are an important reserve for future changes in the dairy industry and must be conserved. *Continued on next page*

Figure 1. Estimated current dairy breed status in the United States based on herds of 30 animals or more (1996)

Breed	Estimated percent of dairy industry 1996	Standard error	Estimated total breed population
Holstein	93.0%	0.8	8,753,160
Jersey	4.1%	0.6	385,892
Guernsey	1.7%	0.4	160,004
Brown Swiss	0.4%	0.2	37,648
Ayrshire	0.3%	0.1	28,236
Others	0.5%	0.2	47,060
Total	100.0		9,412,000

Adapted from USDA:APHIS:VS 1996

The Changing U.S. Cattle Industry

The beef industry

In contrast to the dairy industry, the beef industry in the United States has more than 70 breeds of cattle, with new breeds being developed or imported regularly. The Angus and Hereford are the predominant breeds, with the Simmental a close third. While these dominate the purebred scene, the beef cows today are "commercial crossbreeds." Producers breed their cows with "exotic" purebred bulls which often include the recently imported, heavily muscled European breeds. The industry has taken pride in its ability to meet the needs of the consumer, going from the short, stocky animals of 50 years ago to the taller, more heavily muscled, and leaner animals of today.

Another contrast to the dairy industry is the economic viability of small herds. In 1996, 50.3% of the nation's 34 million beef cows were in herds of 100 cows or fewer (USDA:NASS, 1997). This reflects the fact that the beef industry still offers tremendous opportunities, including opportunities for new and rare breeds. Breeds with recognized traits, such as rapid growth, high beef quality, high fertility, foraging ability or special environmental adaptations can often compete on small cow-calf operations where the emphasis is still on minimizing labor and feed costs. This sector of the industry, however, may be in for some big changes. The National Cattlemen's Association's Beef 2000 and Beyond Task Force recently produced a ten point plan which will lead to a sweeping transformation in production, distribution and marketing of beef products. While many of the agenda items focus on marketing, a few of the items are alarming, especially those with specific regard to unique breeds and cattle that do not fit neatly into a plan for more vertical integration. The first agenda item has as its goal the stabilization of product quality and consistency, much like the poultry and pork industries. Hopefully this will not be at the expense and loss of many valuable breeds, as we have seen in the

poultry and pork industries. Agenda item six is particularly interesting, as it describes the need to improve genetics and breeding. To do this, the report calls for the design of uniform composite breeds. Task Force members stated that there are too many breeds, too much variation, and too little incentive to deliver lean cattle with acceptable marbling and tenderness. Influenced by packing companies and consumers, the cattle industry may have few incentives to maintain strains of animals outside what the short term markets demand.

Vertical integration and specialization has brought the most dramatic industry changes to the feedlot. Feedlots are increasing in size and shrinking in number. With almost ten million head of cattle in feedlots across the nation any given month (USDA:NASS 1997), packing companies have gained economic power. "Packing companies buy and process live cattle." The largest of these companies are the primary buyers of cattle in the United States, and they have tremendous influence on the types of cattle that breeders are selecting. The companies pay top dollar for "model"

cattle and lower prices for those animals deemed non-standard.

According to Eric Grant, in *Beef Today* (June-July 1997), "Packers are moving at breakneck speed to lock up the genetics that fit their slaughter programs. Most of the nation's largest beef processors have formed alliances with seedstock producers to ensure a steady supply of consistent quality cattle." New composite beef breeds would theoretically meet the demand for cows that can survive in pasture or range conditions, but can also produce fast growing, heavily muscled calves for feedlots.

Companies such as Farmland Black Angus Beef, Agri-Beef, Cargill Beef Alliance, and Monfort are working hard to develop carcass consistency and quality in their cattle by using only certified seedstock producers. At the same time, more and more packing companies are moving toward vertical integration, at least from the feedlot to the consumer. Time will tell if they will incorporate into their plans the 50% of the nation's beef cows that are owned by independent farmers and ranchers with herds of fewer than 100 cows.



Drew in Kansas with Bar and Tab (shorthorn oxen) being filmed for the movie, *In Search of the Oregon Trail*.

The Changing U.S. Cattle Industry

Conclusion

Globally the market for beef and dairy products is growing. As the number of people involved in agriculture in the Western World continues to decline, food production is coming to rest in the hands of a few. While the majority of the cattle in the world are still dual or triple-purpose animals valued for environmental adaptation, the majority of agricultural trade in beef or dairy products belongs to the countries and breeds that have specialized. This means that rare breeds around the world must continue to find ways for their animals to find a place in the changing global market.

If the most obvious legacy of the U.S. cattle industry is its productivity, it is important that the foundation for this accomplishment - genetic diversity in the form of many pure breeds - is not discarded but conserved in order to serve the next wave of changes that are certain to come. ♣

Drew Conroy is an Associate Professor of Applied Animal Science at the University of New Hampshire and is currently serving on the Board of Directors for the American Livestock Breeds Conservancy. Drew has kindly agreed to serve as ox instructor, judge, and guest speaker at this year's AGM in Cobleskill, NY.

This article is excerpted from a presentation the author gave at the 1997 ALBC annual members' meeting and conference held at Shelburne Farms in Shelburne, Vermont.

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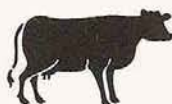
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ANNUAL MEETING

♣ AGENDA ♣

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Thursday, May 31

2:00 to 5:00 Oxen & participants arrive
5:00 to 8:00 Ox Orientation
6:30 Light supper served

Friday, June 1

7:30 Continental Breakfast
8:30 Ox Training
10:00 Break
12:00 Lunch provided
1:00 to 4:00 Ox Workshop concludes
6:00 Get Together for a Light Buffet
A Chance to Chat with Ox Teamsters: Drew Conroy and Tucker Matteson
Results of the Video Show
8:00 Board Meeting

Saturday, June 2

7:30 Continental Breakfast
8:00 to 11:00 Annual General Meeting
11:30 Lunch
1:00 to 5:00 Brief Ox Demonstration
Followed by Live Show & Sale
6:30 Social Hour and White Dexter Sale
7:30 Dinner
8:30 Drew Conroy shares: Tales from Tanzania: What I Learned from a Maasai Warrior about Oxen, Biodiversity, and Genetic Conservation

Sunday, June 3

8:00 Breakfast
Meeting of Board of Directors
At Howe Caverns

CONTACT INFORMATION

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2001 Annual Meeting Update



We're looking forward to seeing as many ADCA members and Dexter enthusiasts as possible here in NYS from May 31 through June 3, 2001 at the SUNY College at Cobleskill. Remember we're meeting earlier this year, so I would urge people to get started early on the video show entries and other plans to participate.

One question that has come up is regarding owning oxen to participate in the workshop Thursday evening and all day on Friday. You don't need oxen to be involved in learning about ox training. Come and learn what you can. This is an opportunity to see Dexters in that third purpose that they can serve in which is fine draft animals. I'm trying to round up a couple more folks with Dexter oxen to be on hand with their steers. We expect to be bringing one yoke. (Unfortunately the yoke on last issue's cover is suffering from the old lame ox syndrome and may not be able to join us.) I believe that Lewis Van Ord of Pennsylvania may be able to come. Unfortunately he is seriously considering selling his Dexter oxen and may no longer have them by the time we meet. The Mattesons will be with us and so will their oxen which are extremely well trained. It doesn't look like Myles Matteson will be with us because of testing that he needs to take for college. The sad part is that these fine, young ox teamsters are growing up. Tucker Matteson will be on hand to show us how it's done.

Drew Conroy will be bringing his family with him. We look forward to meeting all of the Conroys. We are indeed lucky to have someone with Drew's level of cattle expertise to be with us. He is a fine combination of college credentials and everyday experience with cattle. Make sure that you let us know early if you'll be attending any of the events because we will open up participation to members of the College and agricultural community.

Anybody have a young, socialized, preferably bull, calf that Drew could use for demonstration purposes? Having a pair of them would be even better. I don't think that Drew wants to

demonstrate any rodeo techniques so if the calf has at least been handled and can be tied it would be helpful. If the calf would lead, it would be even better. Let me know if you do. Should they be for sale after they've done the demo would be even better (518-993-2823, or kesmith@telenet.net).

Certainly all of the AGM needs the support of the membership, but in particular both the video and live shows, and sale need participation. The video show is the perfect opportunity to enter that good-looking animal walking around out in your pasture when it's too far to bring them on the hoof. Moreover, this is the place to feature your farm or ranch, when you're unable to attend yourself. Please read the information that is required and consider entering one of your animals. Wes and Jane

Patton have done a superior job of facilitating this event for the ADCA. Let's give them lots of entries and really put them to work!!

Regarding the live show and sale, if you live within possible driving distance, have the vet stop by to check out Old Bessie, and then throw her in the trailer and bring her along. I know Slavka Perrone and I made it to Missouri a few years ago with a camper, a big brown dog, and a stock trailer filled with one heifer (belonging to Gary Williams of Maine) and two yoke-broke bull calves. The middle of the night along the Interstates and truck stops is a whole new world. We left two worried husbands at home. All survived the trip, even the dog. It can be done!

We need cattle for the show and sale. Let's make it the best Dexter show east of the Mississippi in 2001. This year Slavka Perrone is accepting entries for the live show and sale, let's keep her busy! Remember you don't necessarily have to sell what you show, but you need to declare your intentions early.

Joan Storck of Kansas has graciously offered to make the trophies for the shows. I know I join everyone when I say we thank her for this gracious offer, which I have taken her up on. We look forward to seeing them. Kathy Ireland of NJ has cordially agreed to take on the responsibility for the White Dexter Sale. Again, this is a way to represent both your herd and yourself,

even if you can't attend, but by all means bring yourself along as well. There is no definitive theme. Bring what you feel represents yourself, your area, and is of interest to Dexter folks will be fine. Remember we are a fun-loving lot! Where did those halters come from I bought last year? Was it Steve Burdette in PA? Everybody can sure use things like halters.



Tucker Matteson riding Calvin.

John Potter, Regional Director for Michigan,

Ontario, Quebec, and Eastern Provinces, has been doing some research on genetics and has agreed to share some of his findings. We look forward to what he can add on this topic of current and enduring interest.

I recently learned that two Dexter breeders from England will be joining us. Kevin and Di Smith will be bringing some slides with them and are prepared to share some thoughts about Dexters in England. This promises to be a great addition to our program.

Where are you staying? If you haven't found a place to stay as of yet, do get one soon. Remember that this year we have a wide spectrum of possibilities ranging from dorms and apartments to B&B's and motels.

Additional information may be available as necessary on the ADCA website (www.dextercattle.org), and the Schoharie County Chamber of Commerce website.

(www.schohariechamber.com)

We look forward to seeing you in New York. ~ Kathy Smith, ADCA V.P.

Food for thought: Designer beef near?

by Allison Sherry
Denver Post Staff Writer

Cattle producers are hoping to become a little more Calvin Klein. Banking on the growing sophistication of the finicky American, beef producers said Wednesday that within five years types of beef could be like types of apples: labeled and displayed in separate but equal piles at the grocery store.

Instead of having a mound of beef from who knows where, restaurant and grocery chains could start carrying designer beef with labels. Instead of buying a burger, you'd get an *Angus* burger; instead of ordering a 14-ounce steak, you'd get a premium *Hereford* cut.

"You've got to make sure that the cattle fits what the consumer wants," said Rob Ames, who is attending the National Western Stock Show for the Hereford Beef Association. "In the past five years, it's really blossomed. You may find a chain of restaurants or grocery stores that takes one brand of beef, and their competitor will use a different brand. Then the consumer will decide."

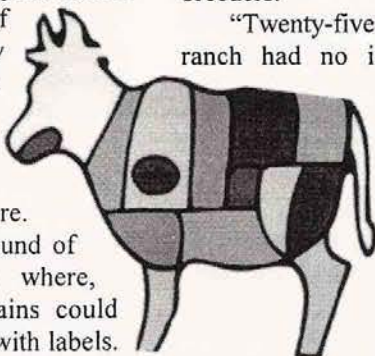
Consumer preference has shaped the beef industry and morphed the dynamics of cattle competitions. Robert Fisher, a Canadian cattle breeder, closely watched the hotly contested lines of airbrushed heifers Wednesday at the show. Ardent competitors have to buy and breed the right-sized cow to get the right-sized steak that someone will order for a Friday night dinner, he said.

"(Cattle producers) aren't buying cows here today just to be slaughtered. They are looking at how well they're going to breed," he said. "It's a science. The last five years they've gotten smaller, because people like smaller cuts of meat."

And leaner. The popularity of the Atkins diet spurred salivating beef marketers to promote beef as a healthy high-protein equivalent to a piece of chicken or a slice of pork, Ames said.

Gary Cowman, who heads research and technology at the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, says technology was a boon to savvy breeders.

"Twenty-five years ago, a guy on a ranch had no idea what consumers wanted. He sold beef and never heard anything about it again," Cowman said. "But now the information is being effectively passed down the chain. They can hear what (people) want and adapt to that."



George Lemm, a cattleman from Virginia, said gauging trends two to three years in advance is not for the "faint-hearted."

"One time I heard a guy ask, 'How does a black cow who eats green grass make white milk and yellow cheese?'" he chuckled. "It's a science, but sometimes you just have to enjoy it." ♣
Article courtesy of the Denver Post, Thursday, January 11, 2001.



*Laughter is brightest
where food is best.
~ Irish proverb*

Region 4 News

WOW, things are really poppin' in Region 4!

As the new Director for Region 4 of the ADCA, I began planning a regional meeting/pot-luck for 2001 to be held in conjunction with the Western Small Acreage Expo presented by Colorado State University Cooperative Extension and Agricultural Experiment Stations. The Expo date is April 28th and will be held at the Intermountain Veterans Memorial Park in Grand Junction, Colorado.

In addition, I now have had the suggestion and offers of help from Utah members in setting up a slate of Dexter classes at the Utah State Fair in conjunction with their cattle show this next year! I'll get details to you as soon as I have them - the interest and enthusiasm of our Region 4 membership is really exciting!

The Expo is designed to benefit small acreage landowners by increasing knowledge in certain areas that may arise. Vendor booths, demonstration sites and seminars and short courses are available. While still in the planning stages, coordinator Rod Sharp has indicated that the program offerings will be similar in nature to those presented last year. There are no fees charged for attendance at the Expo, but early

registration is necessary for some of the seminars in order to provide participants with printed material.

Offerings last year included: *Demonstrations (20-30 Minutes)* Vaccinations/First Aid, Sprayer Calibration, Small Acreage Safety, Soil Testing, Surge Irrigation, Composting, Fencing, Wool Spinning, Buying Quality Hay, Vine & Fruit Training, Drip Irrigation, Mechanical Weed Control, Fruit Frost Control, Sprinkler Irrigation; *Seminars (30 minutes)* Animal Safety, Manure Management, Alternative Livestock, Livestock Care/Management, Insect Pest-Management, Making A Profit, Backyard Poultry, Tree Selection & Care, Property Rights, Noxious Weeds, Alternative Pesticides; and *Short Courses (90 minutes)* Water Issues, Solar Greenhouse Gardening, Pasture Management, Living with Wildlife, and Horse Care/Management.

Anyone interested can contact me by email or pony-express and I will make sure they receive a brochure as soon as they are available. There are many hotels and motels in Grand Junction and I have a fairly large area we can use for parking RV's if the need arises.

Carol Ann Traynor
Region 4 Director

http://www.adca.org/Region4.html

Should You Get Into Value-Added Food Products?

Economic forces, federal farm policies, and consumer choices are causing small farmers to look at the business of farming in new ways. Today's successful farmers are, of necessity, increasingly becoming small business entrepreneurs.

Many small farm experts and policy makers across the nation believe that local value-added agricultural food production where farmers assume more processing steps and sell through direct marketing techniques – is a critical strategy to sustain many small farmers and their communities.

The world's agricultural trade is rapidly shifting from commodities to products. Consumers are demanding products with traits to meet their specific needs. Global competition is intense.

To survive in today's dynamic market, small farmers must interpret market signals accurately. They must carefully consider what mix of crops and other agricultural products will maintain crop diversity and flexibility, and provide more value-added farm income.

Value-Added Defined.

Value-added means adding features – desirable to customers – to a raw agricultural, marine, aquacultural, or forestry material used to make a product. Drying, canning, juicing, combining ingredients, handcrafting, and unique packaging and marketing techniques can add value.

Everyone who adds value to a product as it goes from farm to consumer gets paid. Vertical integration – the farmer doing production, processing, and distributing – can be good for those farmers who are willing and able.

Many farmers have not gone into value-added food products because they are concentrating on what they have traditionally done best – producing a commodity. Doing more of the processing and marketing activities involved in the marketing chain takes time, skill, and extra labor.

Value-added examples include:

- Producing a tomato herb barbecue sauce may earn more profit for a producer than selling tomatoes and herbs separately.

- 23 rancher members of the Rocky

Mountain Beef Cooperative in Colorado do a growing business by producing USDA-certified, all-natural beef for discerning customers, high-end restaurants, and health food supermarkets.

Customer Preference Trends.

Today's customers want taste, nutrition, freshness, variety, and convenience in foods. Baby Boomers want products that promote health. Ethnic populations want foods from their cultural heritage. Kosher, halal, and organic foods are increasingly in demand. Knowing food preferences of particular customer groups can help farmers target products to specialized markets.

Pros and Cons.

Direct marketing, niche markets, and value-added processing offer farmers a share of the 50 percent of the food dollar now going to so-called "middlemen." Value-added based food is the fastest growing segment of the food industry.

Unique value-added products can be marketed to select groups willing to pay higher prices for quality. The key is finding a unique niche for your specialty product and a customer base.

Getting a new product into the highly competitive retail market is difficult. Food processing giants have an edge on processing efficiency and production costs. At least two out of every three new food products introduced fail, due mostly to lack of customer appeal. Only one in five new businesses succeeds for more than three years. Failure to develop and analyze cash-flow statements is a leading cause.

It takes time to sell a new product concept to retailers. Can you afford to invest in a new product for about three years before making a profit? This is often the length of time needed to break even.

Market success depends on many factors, including finding new ways to add value to

products, having a good product customers want, using appropriate technology to save processing costs or increase quality, and finding new markets.

Food Safety.

Food has a legal and regulating structure of its own that sets it apart from any other business because it is so directly related to consumer health. Food safety is a major issue.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture regulates meat and poultry products. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration regulates other food products. Contact your state department of agriculture to find out current rules. Understand relevant health and regulatory issues before identifying appropriate processing procedures for your food product. Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points need to be identified and monitored to ensure that food safety requirements are met and liability risks are minimized. ♣

USDA Small Farm Digest (CSREES)



Western Small Acreage Expo - Grand Junction, CO
2000 Dexter Information Booth

Photograph courtesy of Carol Ann Traynor

The Bovine Tattoo

by John Wolf

I have received a good number of calls over the years that pertained to bovine tattoos, so I decided to write an article for the newsletter on this artistry we call tattooing. I'm sharing information here that I have picked up from other wise men that spoke on this subject over the past fifteen years. Recently a vet checked a Dexter that I tattooed, of which he remarked, "they don't come any better." It was a good feeling.

The first and most important lesson to remember is that the number one failure in making a good, legible tattoo is a DIRTY WAX covered inner ear. First, restrain the animal to prevent violent movements of the head so that the inside ear can be properly cleaned with a soft cloth and rubbing alcohol and then wiped dry.

The equipment necessary for an accurate job is a standard tattoo plier with the ear release and uses a 3/8" digit. The plier holds up to four digits. These digits come in a set of numbers (0-9) and a set of letters (A-Z). I have learned over the years that if you use three digits, which I do (and the ADCA uses):

1. The first character is the first letter in your surname or your herd letter (I use "W").
2. The second character is the calf number for that year. The first calf born to your herd in 2001 is "1".
3. The last letter is the ADCA year letter. For 2001 that letter is "L".

So my first calf born this year would be tattooed with 3 digits (W1L). I have found the need to fill the 4th digit slot in the pliers with a dud or blank letter to act as a spacer. Nipping off the steel points on an unused letter can do this. This will keep all the digits in line and will prevent a drag on the pinholes in the ear as the pliers are released, resulting in a blurred tattoo.

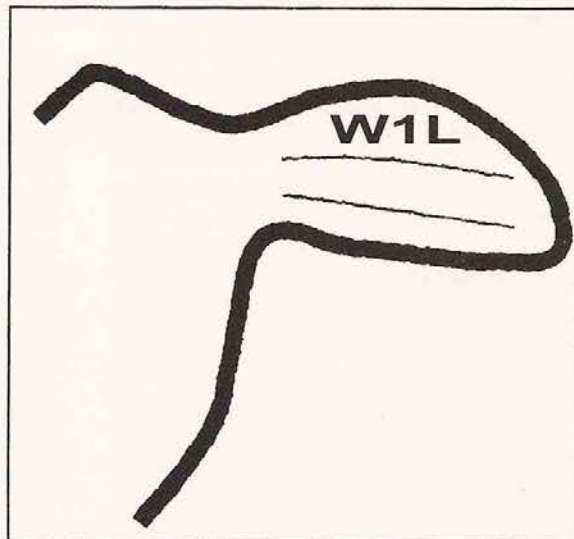
Be sure to try the tattoo pliers on a piece of cardboard so as to satisfy yourself that the numbers and letters are in order.

Now let's discuss the anatomy of the ear. When examining the inner ear you will discover that there are two cords or ribs running horizontally through the ear. One cord runs through the upper part of the ear and the second cord drops toward the lower part of the ear. Care must be exercised to avoid these cords during

tattooing, as hitting one of these cords will result in a poor tattoo as well as an excessive flow of blood. I personally like to use the upper part of the ear where the skin is light in color, also that way if you are using insecticide or numbered tags, the middle part of the ear will give them a much better balance.

The next important step is the tattoo ink. The majority of breeders today use either roll-on or paste. I personally like the green ink roll-on for my Dexters, which I apply generously to the spot where the tattoo will be made. The next step is to insert the ear between the jaws of the pliers with the digits on the inside of the ear, and making sure that the needles are free from pinning into the ear cords. Now close the jaws quickly and firmly, then release. This drives the pins deep into the surface of the ear, pushing the green ink pigment into the holes. Additional ink has to then be rolled-on to fill all the holes properly.

The last important step is to apply a generous amount of hemorrhoid ointment (the human kind) over the pinholes. This



Placement of the tattoo in the ear.

will shrink and seal them and keep them from swelling which can cause the pigment to be pushed out. The ointment will cause the skin to heal over the ink quickly and will make a more legible mark over the life of the animal. ♣

Article courtesy of Northwest Dexters, Spring 2000 issue.

Best wishes for a speedy recovery to Rosemary and Peter Brown with regard to their recent illnesses. Rosemary Brown was instrumental in organizing the first World Dexter Congress, held in the U.K. in 1998.



Just a few lines from your old cow-trading Region 6 Director

It has been a good year for the Dexter Association. We have seen the market increase on breeding stock, had a very good annual meeting, show and sale. We were all saddened at the loss of one of our best, Jerry Starnes. Looking on into 2001, we need to join forces and put together enough cattle to have a show and a possible sale at the Kansas State Fair in September. We will need a total of 40 animals to do this. The fair board will furnish the judges and match our \$500.00 for the ribbons and trophies. Joanie Storck will fill in the rest of the details. If you do not have the time, Bill Moore has said that he will pick up and train your animals for the show for a small fee. I have already had some feedback from the Region 1 breeders that they will join in. We need breeders from Oklahoma, Texas, and all of the other states to pull this off. So get in touch with me or Joanie Storck to commit your animals for the fair. As big as the show and sale was in Region One, there is no reason that it cannot happen again in 2001. This is not to replace the annual meeting but to help spread the good word on Dexters.

Your Old Dexter Promoting Buddy,
Smiling Papa Johnson, Region 6 Director

Pasture FAQ

The following article is the first part of a selection written by Ronald Florence, a distinguished author and historian. The full text can be found at the url: <<http://members.home.net/18james/rural/pasture.html>>. It is reprinted with permission and copyright ©2000 Ronald Florence.

Why pasture?

On many high-productivity farms today, the answer might be "nostalgia" or "to clean up odd corners that the tractors can't reach." Some large, mechanized farms get along with no pasture at all. Dairy cows are fed silage, hay, and grain; market lambs and beef cattle are fattened in feedlots; horses get by on stall feeding. In the interest of efficiency and maximum gains, pasture is sometimes limited to dry cows or rams after breeding.

The economics of large, mechanized farms don't necessarily apply to smaller farms, and especially hobby operations, where pasture can provide excellent low-cost feed, savings in hay and manure handling, reduced use of chemicals and fertilizer, a healthier environment than the barnyard or feedlot, less storage of feed and manure, extra-clean wool or grass-fed lamb or beef for specialty markets, long-term benefits to the land, retention of nutrients in the soil compared with haying, reduction of water pollution problems from nitrate and manure run-off, high productivity on aggressively rotated pastures, and the pleasures of watching foals or lambs gambol on a grass field.

How much pasture do I need?

Pasture needs depend on local rainfall, forage quality, the availability of alternate pastures for rotation, the level of fertilizer and other nutrients applied to the pastures, the time and equipment available for pasture maintenance such as clipping or taking a cutting of hay, the length of the grazing season, and whether the pastures are primary or supplementary feed.

The common rule of thumb is that one acre of permanent pasture can support one animal unit (1000 lbs. of grazing animal) through the grazing season. Other units, such as DSE (Dry Sheep Equivalent) are also used to measure livestock carrying capacity. Pasture productivity can vary widely from that guideline. Lush improved pastures can provide grazing for 10-12 ewes with their lambs per acre. Stocking rates for aggressive rotation schemes, with substantial rests for the pastures after each grazing cycle, can reach 200 sheep per acre on improved pastures. At the other end of the scale, a cow or horse would have trouble supporting itself on five or even ten acres of dry Western native grassland, and one sheep per acre is the rule on some Australian sheep stations.

Too much pasture can be as big a problem as too little, unless you can take a cutting of hay when the forage gets ahead of the animals, or

use a mower to clip weeds and over-ripe grass to provide fresh grazing. See the Haying FAQ for information on haying practices and equipment.

Measuring Pastures

Eyeball estimates of the size of a field are often way off. Calculating the area of a field is not difficult if the field can be divided up into a set of triangles and rectangles, and you can measure the length of each side of each rectangle and triangle with a measuring wheel or tape. An alternative, if you can spend some time with a transit or theodolite, along with a measuring wheel or tape, is the Survey Worksheet. Accurate size estimates are useful in calculating carrying capacity, fertilizer and lime application rates, and in measuring forage yield for Management Intensive Grazing.

Irrigation

The carrying capacity of pasture land can be extended dramatically, especially in dry areas, with irrigation. The rule of thumb is that irrigation will increase dry matter (DM) production by 40%. You need a reliable source of water, which in the west generally means water rights, and the equipment is expensive: low pressure units adequate for up to 40 acres are \$5,000-\$10,000; high pressure guns are \$15,000-\$50,000 for 20-100 acres; and centerpivots (the round green circles you see when flying cross-country) are \$50,000-\$300,000 for 100-240 acres. Frequent shallow irrigation can be effective, creating a network of surface roots that quickly respond to water; shallow irrigation is only effective if it is continuous. For irregular irrigation, deeper watering will encourage a deeper root structure that is better able to handle dry periods.

Can I graze different animals together?

In most cases, you can graze different animals together, and their different grazing and browsing patterns will increase the productivity of your pastures. Horses and cattle mostly eat grasses, and only occasionally eat forbs or browse brush and trees. Goats eat mostly browse, with a much smaller intake of grass and forbs. Sheep eat younger grasses, forbs, and browse. By taking advantage of the different patterns, you can not only increase the productivity of your pastures, but keep weeds and brushy growth under control with minimal mowing and herbicides.

Often, additional animals of a different species can be added to your pastures without reducing the existing population. As a rule of thumb, adding one ewe for each grazing cow will not require additional pasture. Sheep will eat closer to the cowpies than the cattle, taking advantage of the lush growth from the potassium, nitrogen, and phosphorus in the urine and manure. A few cattle grazing with sheep will consume coarse stems and seedheads that the sheep refuse to eat. Other combinations may require experimentation. Another useful grazing scheme is to rotate different species

onto a pasture. After cattle eat the rough growth, sheep will eat the lower grasses and legumes that the cattle cannot reach. In some instances combining species can have advantages: sheep will control leafy spurge that would otherwise limit the productivity of cattle pastures.

Pastures can also be used for swine and poultry. Swine on pasture need nose rings to prevent rooting up of the forage, and poultry pastures need periodic rotation to other uses to prevent build-up of diseases, as well as portable pasture cages.

Some cautions in grazing species together: There are some diseases which can be transmitted between species, such as leptospirosis, which horses can pick up by drinking from cattle tanks or ponds. Also, the mineral needs of different species can be far enough apart that mineral mixes or TM salt that is appropriate for one species will include levels of some minerals that could prove toxic for another species. For example, most bovine mineral mixtures carry far more copper than bovines can tolerate. There are even variations among breeds: for example, some tests have shown that Simmental cattle need more copper than other breeds. If you're pasturing animals together, you may have to study the labels on mineral mixtures carefully to make sure you can meet the special requirements of some species (for example, ovines without molybdenum in their diet from forage or a special mineral supplement will have extremely low tolerance for copper). If for special reasons, your animals have widely differing mineral needs, you may have to pasture them separately.

How do I convert woodland, or an old field, to a productive pasture?

The methods depend on whether you have more money or more time. Instant pastures are expensive. If you're willing to spend a few years on the project, it can be done with minimal investment.

Start with a survey of the trees. There may be some trees you want to leave on an overgrown orchard, field, or woodlot, like old apple trees or ancient "wolf" trees on the edges of a field. Most animals enjoy fallen fruit (watch out for drunk sheep if the apples lie too long), and all animals need shade. You may be able to sell mature trees to a logger; otherwise, take advantage of the firewood. If you have access to a chipper, the slash can be chipped for garden mulch and as path coverings. Alternatives for the slash are burning (you'll probably need a permit), or piling in an out-of-the-way area as a wildlife refuge. It will eventually rot down.

Clearing Land

The quick way to a pasture is to hire a bulldozer with a grubber blade, or a backhoe, to clear the stumps and stones. A grubber blade looks like a huge rake, and will clear out

Pasture FAQ

stumps and large stones without scraping away the topsoil. A good backhoe operator can also pull stumps and stones without disrupting too much of the topsoil. Some backhoe operators find it easier to pull stumps when the trees are left standing, by using leverage high up on the trunk. It may be wise to ask before you bring out the chainsaw. If you hire a bulldozer without a grubber blade, make sure the operator scrapes the topsoil aside before pulling stones and stumps, and regrades the topsoil afterwards.

If you have more patience than money, saw stumps parallel to the ground -- a sharp stump can wreak havoc with tractor tires or the feet of livestock -- and where possible, cut the stumps low enough to clear a mower, so you can clip the pasture even before the stumps rot. You may want to hire a backhoe or dozer to pull a few large stones, or learn to live with them. Lambs love a big stone or two for games.

You can cut brush low to the ground with a chainsaw, a saw-blade on a heavy-duty weed-whacker, a heavy-duty brush hog, or a hydroax (a super heavy-duty brush-hog mounted on an excavator). Be careful with light-duty brush hogs on heavy brush or a stony field, or saw-blades on lawn-trimmers. You may be able to scrape away some brush with a bucket-loader on a tractor, though most tractor loaders don't take kindly to being treated as a bulldozer. You may have to mow some brush repeatedly to eliminate the growth.

Be cautious in converting an old orchard or other cropland on which there has been profligate use of chemical sprays to pasture land. Experiments on former orchards have measured dangerous or production-inhibiting levels of copper, lead, arsenic, and other minerals many years after the last spraying. Thorough soil tests are a good idea before extensive grazing.

Using Animals to do the Work

Sometimes, it is easiest to use animals to clear the brush. Goats are specialists, often preferring brush to grass and clover. Sheep love poison ivy and bittersweet, and will clean up leafy spurge, which has proved a problem in areas as widespread as the western range states and Rhode Island. Donkeys like young thistle plants. The real masters of brush clearing are pigs, who will eat roots and all if they are put out without nose rings. The trick to getting animals to clear brush and weeds is to confine them to a relatively small area with a tether or temporary fences. If they have an entire pasture to roam, animals seek out tasty new grass, clover or buds. When they are confined to a small area, they eat everything in sight, including brush and weeds. One clever trick for stumps is to drill deep holes in the perimeter of the stump and fill them with corn grain; pigs will work until they have even a large stump out to get the last of the grain.

Watch out for poisonous plants when

"mob stocking" a pasture to eliminate rough or unwanted growth: animals that are pressed may ingest plants that they would avoid under normal grazing conditions.

Once you have the trees and brush cleared, it's time to upgrade the pasture.

How do I improve the present mix of native grasses and weeds?

The greatest improvements to the soil and the pasture comes from careful and controlled grazing. The addition of animal manures and urine, and the regular "mowing" of the forage from livestock grazing in large enough numbers, will do wonders for a pasture. Sometimes, a few additional steps can help the animals do their job.

Identifying existing forage

Identifying the existing grasses and legumes in a pasture is important in planning improvements. If you don't recognize some of the forages, Extension offices and the herbicide manufacturers produce manuals with photos, or try the USDA query engine; there are also plant-identification guides at the Oregon State, Wisconsin Dairy Grazing and Grassfarmer sites.

Once you can identify the existing forage, the first step is a soil test. In many areas of the country, pasture land has a pH too low to support the better forage grasses and legumes. The soil test -- make sure you specify the target forage when you turn in the sample -- will tell you how much lime to add. Some indicators of low pH in a pasture are the presence of wild strawberry plants, buckhorn plantain, red sorrel, moss on the soil surfaces, mole activity, the absence of quackgrass or brome grass in well drained areas, and the absence of reed canary grass in poorly drained areas. In low pH soils, alfalfa will be stunted, with yellow leaves on the newer growth. Even if there are clear signs of low pH, a soil test will give a more precise guide to how much lime is needed.

Lime

Adding lime to bring the soil up to a pH of 6.0 or 6.5 (possibly even higher for legume pastures, or lower in some areas of the country for warm-season grasses) will encourage more productive legumes and grasses in the pasture mix; increase uptake of calcium and magnesium to the grazing animals; reduce toxicity of minerals like Al and Mn; increase soil flocculation and internal drainage; increase phosphorus availability; improve the activity of micro-organisms in converting ammonia to nitrates and in the breakdown of soil organic matter; and increase the nitrogen fixation of legumes like clover and alfalfa. Small changes can be significant on the logarithmic pH scale: a pH of 5.0 is ten times more acid than a pH of 6.0. On soils that are extremely low on phosphorus, it may be necessary to add phosphorus before the effects of liming are apparent. Adding more lime than soil test recommendations is not a good idea: as pH rises

over 7.0, some essential micronutrients, such as manganese, zinc, copper, and cobalt become less available to plants, even when adequate quantities of the minerals are in the soil.

If you cannot disc in the lime when it is applied, applications of more than two tons/acre may need to be split over a period of a year or so. You can spread lime yourself with a dump spreader (they're often available at auctions or used implement dealers), or a fertilizer spreader on a tractor, but it may be easier and cheaper to have a local blending plant spread it by truck. Spreading lime with a fertilizer spreader is a dusty and inefficient job; the lime will cake up in the spreader, and if it isn't washed off carefully, the metal parts of the spreader will end up looking like swiss cheese. An alternative is to build a homemade lime spreader on the back of a wagon or truck. A disc harrow is ideal for incorporating lime, which is slow to migrate from the surface of the soil. A tractor-mounted tiller will also incorporate lime, but is slower to use, especially in soils with high clay content. Make sure the soil is relatively dry, especially if you are using a tiller instead of a disc harrow.

Passive Improvements

For low-input passive improvement, you can introduce clovers and other desirable forage species by feeding mature hay on the pastures. Small seeds, such as birdsfoot trefoil, can be added to grain or salt rations of animals. Seed can also be added to each load in the manure spreader, or broadcast in early spring or fall onto a heavily-grazed field. The animals will distribute seeds in their manure, and trample the seeds into the ground as they feed.

You can also change the balance between native clovers and grasses, or the mix of grasses in a pasture, by adjusting the formula and timing of fertilizer application, or by modifying the pH of the soil. Adding nitrogen-rich fertilizer, and early fertilizer application, favors grasses; heavier applications of potash and phosphate and later application favors the clovers. Higher pH from applied lime generally favors native clover and other legumes.

Timing your grazing and mowing can also improve the pasture. Grazing heavily early, when grasses come up before the legumes, will favor the legumes. Grazing heavily or mowing when jointed grasses like brome grass have their growing point close to the ground will retard their growth. Alternately, if grasses are allowed to reach boot stage, when seed heads have formed inside the stems, cutting or grazing encourages rapid regrowth.

Reseeding

For more aggressive improvement, once you have the pH up where you want it -- usually close to neutral for alfalfa or clovers, a little lower for grasses -- you have a choice of reseeding from clean tillage or over-seeding. For lush mono-culture grass pastures, or for

Continued on next page

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Continued from previous page

planting legumes like birdsfoot trefoil or alfalfa that don't compete well, in some areas clean tillage may be the only possibility. You may need to plow under the old turf; you will certainly need extensive disking. It's hard dusty work, and the animals will have no use of the pasture until the new seeding is well-established. In some cases you may have better results if you plant an interim crop before a final disking and seeding with the desired grass or legumes. Buckwheat that you can harrow in as green manure works well to choke out weeds, or you can plant dwarf Essex rape, turnips, oats or rye, and let your animals graze down the temporary pasture before a final seeding. Keep your animals off the newly seeded pasture until it is well established.

Many native grass pastures can be renovated without plowing and harrowing to clean tillage. Soil test results will tell you what fertilizer to apply for the new seeding. You can then over-seed with a no-till seeder (some agricultural extension offices rent or loan them), after killing the existing sod with Roundup™ or another herbicide, or grazing the sod down aggressively with mob stocking of sheep or pigs. Gramoxone (Paraquat™) will provide a "burndown" of the existing vegetation without killing roots, for interseeding in an existing sod. If you don't have access to a no-till seeder, you can graze the existing grasses hard, then overseed with a conventional seed drill; used seed drills are often available cheap, and the small legume seeds can be distributed either through the usual seed bin or through the insecticide bin; the press wheel or an auxiliary chain dragged behind the drill will cover the seed and increase the seed to soil contact.

An alternative, if you don't have access to a seed drill, is a few passes with a disc or a field cultivator to incorporate added fertilizer and lime and disturb from 50% to 100% of the existing grasses. This will allow root space and light to a new seeding and lessen allelopathic effects from existing grasses and legumes (for example, you normally cannot seed alfalfa into an existing stand of alfalfa because of allelopathic effects). Lime and phosphorus input should come 6-12 months before seeding, if possible. If your soil has some clay content and shows frost cracks in late winter, you may not need to disc if you frost seed in late winter, after the snow is off but while the ground is still frozen. Small-seed clovers, annual and perennial ryegrasses, birdsfoot trefoil, and orchardgrass frost seed successfully, usually with better success into non-rhizomatous grasses; brome grass and Kentucky bluegrass can provide too much competition for frost seeding to succeed. The same technique could be used in California to seed into the soil cracks at the end of a dry summer. Broadcast the new seed at a heavy rate and either roll, harrow

lightly, or drag with branches, a wooden drag, or an old bedspring to set the seed. A temporary mob stocking with sheep or cattle will also set the seed.

For grasses like bermudagrass that are planted from sprigs, you can either rent, borrow or purchase a sprigger (Bermuda King in Okarche, OK still makes them; ask for Richard Reynolds. Or try Spriggers Choice in Parrott, GA; ask for Jesse or Mary Grimsley), or broadcast the sprigs and cut them in lightly with a disc harrow. The latter procedure is not as efficient, and may require a heavier coverage with the sprigs. Some newer varieties, like Cheyenne Bermudagrass, produce the yield and quality of Coastal Bermudagrass, but can be seeded, avoiding the hassles of sprigging.

Early Grazing

Whenever you seed from clean tillage, or overseed an established field, be careful not to allow grazing animals out onto the field too early. Ruminants and equines eat grasses and legumes by pinching them between teeth or teeth and gum, and tearing them off with a movement of the head or neck. If the root structure of the newly seeded grasses and legumes is not well established, grazing animals can destroy the new seeding in short order. To test whether the new seeding can stand up to grazing, grab a bunch of grass in your fist and tear it off; if roots come up, it is too early to graze. It is a good idea not to let the grass grow too long before grazing. Cows and horses wrap their tongues around long forage and jerk it out. They will do less damage on shorter grass, and grazing before the grass is too long will prevent shading of emerging clovers.

If you are seeding legumes to upgrade a pasture, when grass growth begins, and as soon as the soil is dry enough to avoid tracking, graze the newly seeded fields with enough animals to keep the grass short. This will open the field to provide light to the new legume seedlings. If you cannot graze down the early grass with animals, you may have to mow it to allow light down to the legumes. Keep the animals on the pasture until you see them starting to eat the newly seeded legumes. Then pull the animals off and let the legumes grow undisturbed for 6-8 weeks for clovers, 8-12 weeks for alfalfa. At this stage, don't worry about the weeds; it's more important to get the new seedlings established. When the legumes are vigorous, you can begin a regular grazing program.

Don't be discouraged if it takes a while for your new pasture to establish. Germination and establishment rates for most seeded grasses are relatively low. Perennial rye and some of the clovers are an exception, but particularly if you are waiting for native clovers and bluegrass to spread after you have improved the pH and nutrient level in the soils, it may take a few years of controlled grazing and clipping before

the pasture matures. Voisin, in *Grass Productivity* said that it takes a century to develop a really good pasture. I have no experience of a century of improvement, but I've seen major improvement in one year of controlled grazing. A careful management program, using animals, a mower, and the addition of needed nutrients, can convert woodland or an abandoned field into a productive pasture in a few years at minimal cost.

What should I seed in pastures?

Mono-culture grass pastures are sometimes used on picture-book horse farms, and mono-culture legumes are sometimes used for aggressively rotated paddocks or where a cutting of high quality hay is taken off the pasture in the spring. In general, the most productive and lowest maintenance improved pastures for ruminants are mixed legumes and grass. The advantage of mixing legumes and grass on a pasture is that the clover and grass grow at different times of year, providing good feed through the seasons. And once inoculated clover or other legumes are established, they will generate nitrogen that will in turn fertilize the grass -- saving the expense of added nitrogen fertilizer.

Herbs

There is also some recent interest in the use of herbs in pasture mixes. Animals love the herbs, and some have beneficial medicinal properties, including serving as natural anthelmintics. Chicory, lotus, garlic and parsley are favorites in New Zealand. Rosemary and garlic in the pastures would give you pre-seasoned lamb; it takes anywhere from a few weeks to a few months for flavors to begin to affect the meat (pine is quick, apple is slow). Be careful with herbs if you're using or selling the milk from your animals: Thomas Hardy's *Far From the Madding Crowd* is a good example of the perils of garlic in a pasture for dairy cattle. Most herbs cannot tolerate heavy grazing, and are best reserved for special paddocks that are grazed twice a year.

Legumes

Typical legumes for pasture seeding are red, ladino, alsike, or white clover; birdsfoot trefoil; and alfalfa. Birdsfoot trefoil and alfalfa are often tough to establish except in clean tillage. Grazing alfalfa successfully requires a fairly aggressive rotation scheme, and precautions so the animals will not bloat, and because alfalfa is auto-toxic (existing alfalfa prevents successful establishment of new alfalfa seeds), it is difficult to maintain a long-term stand of alfalfa. Birdsfoot trefoil produces only about 80% of the dry-matter per acre of alfalfa, is slow-growing in the spring, and does not stand up well to continuous grazing, but it does not cause bloat, picky animals will consume more of the delicate stems than with alfalfa, it retains its palatability well when stockpiled for late season grazing, and it seems

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to do well in cooler climates and drought conditions. There is some evidence that a diet heavy in birdsfoot trefoil can retard ovulation in ewes. Use an upright variety of birdsfoot trefoil if you are also planning to cut hay from the field.

For renovation seeding, a combination of ladino and red clover works well in many areas. Red clover can handle shading by grasses better than most other clovers; ladino clover has small seeds that do well in partially tilled soils. Some tests have indicated that phytoestrogens in red clover and subclover can retard ovulation in ewes, so they may not be a good choice for a pasture used for flushing sheep before breeding. (The simplest test of phytoestrogens is to put wethers in the paddock and check if their teats enlarge and they show signs of lactation.) Red clover is also susceptible to a mold that causes photosensitivity and slobbering in equines. White clover grows too low to cut for hay, so it may not be a good choice on a pasture where you're planning to take an occasional cutting of hay. Alsike clover grows well on poorer soils, but has been associated with photosensitization, colic, scours, and behavioral aberrations in equines. White clover tolerates close grazing and trampling well, and is a traditional companion seeding for bluegrass or perennial ryegrass. Make sure you inoculate legume seeds before seeding if they are not pre-inoculated. If there is little native clover in your pastures, it may be a good idea to inoculate even pre-inoculated legumes.

Hairy vetch is frequently used as a green manure to improve land. It grows well even on low pH land, and will provide good grazing until it begins to flower. Once it has flowered, it is unpalatable to most animals. Hairy vetch is difficult to mow and almost impossible to dry and rake for hay.

Predominantly legume pastures present the potential danger of bloating in ruminants, and laminitis and/or founder in equines. Bloat is a potential concern on pastures with heavy concentrations of clover or alfalfa. The problem can generally be avoided if stock are fed their fill of dry hay the morning they are put on legume-rich pastures, and if stock are not put out early in the morning when the lush forage is damp with dew. Aggressive rotation schemes on mixed grass-alfalfa pastures will help avoid bloat by forcing the stock to consume plenty of high-fiber grasses along with the alfalfa. There is some evidence that the old recommendation of initially rotating stock onto legume pastures for short periods may actually aggravate the potential bloat problem by extending the adaptation to the new rumen flora and fauna. Bloatguard™ or other poloxalene formulations can be administered to prevent bloat in some situations. Another solution is to introduce measured quantities of a surfactant like dish detergent into the drinking water, in small enough dosages to avoid foaming and water

rejection by the stock; this can be done with automatic dosing devices that are usually used for medications or antithelmics.

Grasses

Among the grasses, orchardgrass, bromegrass, timothy, bluegrass, tall fescue, reed canarygrass, bermudagrass, and perennial ryegrass are all popular in pastures. Unless you've cleared to clean tillage, chances are your pasture will be a mixture of grasses. Some farms structure their grazing to provide a rotation between cool-season grasses (bluegrass, bromegrass), which do best in the spring and fall, and warm-season grasses like bermudagrass, bluestem, or perennial peanut. There are many favorite combinations, especially among the cool-season grasses: bluegrass and white clover, perennial ryegrass and ladino clover, orchard grass and red/alsike clover. Reed canarygrass does well in wetter areas, but sheep may find it unpalatable, and if not mowed or grazed frequently it turns stemmy; try newer varieties like Palaton, Venture or Rival, which are lower in alkaloids and more palatable. It can be difficult to establish; pre-mixing the seed with saltpeter (potassium nitrate) the night before seeding can help break the dormancy of the seeds. Local usage may suggest a combination for your area. If you are reconditioning several fields, you may get higher overall productivity by using different combinations in different fields, to take advantage of the different maturity dates of the various grasses.

There are some terrific new varieties of grasses coming from the forage seed companies, such as the World Feeder Bermuda Grass, which has deeper roots and an extended growing season, and new winter-hardy perennial ryegrasses. Remember that even the new varieties cannot perform miracles, and all grasses require appropriate management and conditions. In an area with frequent frosts and without a steady snow cover, most perennial

grasses are not likely to survive the winters. Reed canary grass will become stemmy and unpalatable if they are not grazed or mowed aggressively. Even if you can afford fancy new forage grasses in your pasture seeding mix, there is much to say for including old favorites, like Kentucky Bluegrass, which spreads laterally via rhizomes to fill in open areas, creates a dense sod that can survive grazing in wet seasons and over-grazing, and is highly palatable. The ideal-condition productivity of some of the newer grasses is impressive, but most pastures rarely achieve ideal-conditions. You may find the average productivity and palatability of your pastures higher with a mix of grasses and clovers.

Mixes

Some mixes of grasses are less successful than others. For example, in rotationally grazed paddocks, dairy cattle will generally favor orchard grass and white clover and leave fescue ungrazed. Unless other stock can be brought in to clean up behind the lactating cows, the fescue will grow rank. In these circumstances it may be more effective to confine fescue to paddocks that will be stockpiled for late fall and winter grazing.

In many cases native varieties are harder than fancy and expensive forage varieties. For example, lawn varieties of perennial rye are generally winter-hardy and if purchased locally

Continued on next page

Common Pasture Forages in the Northeast U.S.

Cool-season Grasses							
Species	Soil moisture	Soil fertility & optimum pH	Drought tolerance	Maturity & Production	Persistence	Growth habit	Height
Kentucky Bluegrass	well-drained to moist	good to medium, 6.0-6.5	poor	early spring & late fall	long	dense sod	short
Timothy	well-drained to moist	medium to fair, 6.0-6.5	poor	late spring & fall	long	bunch	tall
Smooth bromegrass	well-drained	high to good, 6.5-7.0	good	spring, summer, fall	long	open sod	tall
Orchardgrass	droughty to moist	medium to fair, 6.0-6.5	very good	early spring, summer, fall	4-5 years	bunch	tall
Reed canarygrass	droughty to wet	medium to fair, 5.5-6.0	very good	early spring, summer, fall	long	open sod	tall
Perennial ryegrass	well-drained to moist	good to medium, 6.0-6.5	poor	early spring & late fall	3-4 years, easy to reseed	bunch	short
Tall fescue	droughty to moist	medium to fair, 5.5-6.0	very good	early spring, summer, fall	long, with fertilization	variable ¹	tall
Matua prairiegrass	droughty to moist	medium to fair, 5.5-6.0	very good	early spring, summer, fall ²	long	bunch	tall
Warm-season Grasses							
Species	Soil moisture	Soil fertility & optimum pH	Drought tolerance	Maturity & Production	Persistence	Growth habit	Height
Switchgrass	droughty to moist	poor to fair, 5.5-6.0	excellent	summer	long	bunch	tall
Big bluestem	droughty to moist	poor to fair, 5.5-6.0	excellent	summer	long	bunch	tall
Legumes							
Species	Soil moisture	Soil fertility & optimum pH	Drought tolerance	Maturity & Production	Persistence	Growth habit	Height
Alfalfa	well-drained	high to good, 6.5-7.0	very good	spring, summer, early fall	4-6 years	bunch	tall
Red clover	well-drained	good to medium, 6.0-6.5	fair	spring, summer, fall	2 years	bunch	tall
Birdsfoot trefoil	droughty to wet	medium to fair, 5.5-6.0	very good	spring, summer, early fall	4-6 years, sometimes longer	bunch	variable ³
White clover	moist	medium, 6.0-6.5	poor	spring, fall	self-reseeds	spreading	short
Ladino clover	moist	good to medium, 6.0-6.5	poor	spring, summer, fall	2 years	spreading	short

1. Bunches under lax cutting; forms a sod under intense cutting or grazing.
2. Depends on winter temperatures and fall management.
3. Available in both creeping and upright varieties.

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Continued from previous page
generally have heat tolerance for local conditions; many of the fancy, imported varieties, which were bred for climates like New Zealand, England, or Holland, are not winter-hardy and/or heat-tolerant in much of the U.S. The trade-off is that lawn varieties are often not endophyte-free, and are not suitable for equines or high-production dairy cattle. An alternative is to frost seed annual ryegrass each spring; the seed is cheap, it makes good feed, and walking the pastures with a hand-cranked broadcast seeder, or driving with an ATV-mounted seeder is pleasant and inexpensive.

In some areas of the U.S., white clover and bluegrass seed are present in the soil and will quickly fill in when the pH and nutrient levels in the soil are adequate. These native varieties are generally well-adapted and can produce highly productive pastures. When the conditions are appropriate, you can mow close or over-graze the weeds and other forage, and allow 6 weeks of regrowth, and native bluegrass and white clover will fill in bare spots with no additional seeding.

Pasture seed companies like Hodder & Tolley in New Zealand, Cotswold Grass Seeds in Gloucestershire, UK, and Eastbrook Seed Company have developed cultivars of permanent grasses with improved cool weather tolerance, to extend grazing seasons well into and in some areas right through the winter. There are also new cultivars of fescues and perennial ryegrass which tolerate continuous grazing far better than older varieties. Local seed catalogues are the best source of cultivars for your area; most large farm supplies like Agway and many of the seed companies have pasture seed catalogues. You may also be able to find recommendations for your locale on the Forage Information System. The alternative for extending grazing seasons is annuals. ♣



From the Editor

Pastures greening and cows calving can make spring an exciting time of year if you're a Dexter breeder. There's something happy and magical about watching the cows dancing in the field on the first warm sunny day.

We'll finish off the spring this year with our annual meeting in New York. As you can see from the picture below, you never know what you might come back home with from the White Dexter Sale; it could even be a white Dexter! So if you're a crafty sort of person and have something that you would like to donate, send it to Kathy Smith, or better yet, bring it in person to New York. Proceeds from the auction go into a general fund that helps to support Dexter regional shows and exhibits.

Speaking of shows, if you haven't already, contact Slavka Perrone about bringing one or more of your Dexters to the show in New York this year. Sometimes new people are nervous about showing if they've never shown cattle before, but if your Dexter is halter broken you shouldn't have any problem. There are always many members at a Dexter show willing to give you their help and support. I read recently that New Mexico had introduced an anti-

fraud bill for livestock shows, banning steer-beautification measures such as dyes and wigs. Of course, this wouldn't affect our shows any, because our cattle look so good naturally, they wouldn't need the extra help. Besides, I've never heard of any of our Dexters wearing wigs. So if you're able to bring a Dexter to the show, don't worry about it being too complicated. You'll not only be part of a long tradition of Dexter showing in New York, but you'll also have a lot of fun doing so.

For those that can't bring their Dexters to New York, don't forget to make a video to send to Wes and Jane Patton.

You should be receiving the new Membership Directory some time before the Summer Bulletin. I'd be more specific about exactly when you'd get it but then the postal service would make a liar of me.

I read that between 1850 and 1900 Dexter cattle were one of several breeds imported to Hawaii. If anyone has any more information about Dexters in the Aloha State, I'd love to hear from you.

Thanks to everyone that contributed to this Bulletin and a Happy St. Patrick's Day to all. 🍀 **Richard Henry, Editor**



Just a note from Pennsylvania to let the people who attended the 2000 annual meeting know that the white Dexter cow is now residing in our front yard, standing guard over our ADCA farm sign.

We really enjoyed meeting many nice people in Marshfield and are looking forward to Cobleskill, N.Y.

Steve & Doris Burdette, Non-Cents Acres

◆ Classified Advertising ◆

Classified advertisements of Dexter cattle/semen are \$15.00 for up to a 2" column ad or \$50.00 per year for four issues. Ads over 2" up to 4" are \$30 per ad or \$100.00 per year for four issues. Color advertising is available on a reserve basis. All ads are limited to Dexters exclusively and subject to approval by the ADCA. Prices for animals will not be published. Make all checks payable to the American Dexter Cattle Association. Please submit payment with your ad and send to:

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Month	States
January	PA, MD, VA, DE, NJ, WV
February	OR, WA, ID, UT, MT, NV, CO, WY
March	CA, AZ, NM
April	KY, TN, IN, IL
May	OH, MI, AL, FL, GA, NC, SC, MS, LA
June	WI
July	AR, KS, MO, TX, OK
August	IA, MN, NE, ND, SD
September	NY, CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT
October	PA, MD, VA, DE, NJ, WV
November	OR, WA, ID, UT, MT, NV, CO, WY
December	CA, AZ, NM

(Applications due 45 days prior to Started Tour)



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Advertising

Kathy Smith, *Chair*
Gwen Casey-Higgins

Color Identification

John Potter, *Chair*
Rosemary Fleharty
Gary Williams
Sandi Thomas

Finance

John Foley, *Chair*

Membership/Information Booklet

Rosemary Fleharty
Richard Henry
Carol Davidson

Promotional Items

Gary Williams, *Chair*

Science

Wes Patton, *Chair*
Dean Fleharty
Lee McIntosh

Special Funding

Marvin Johnson, *Chair*

Technology

Paul Anderson, *Chair*
Rosemary Fleharty

Video Show

Wes Patton
Jane Patton

Website

Gwen Casey-Higgins
Oogie McGuire

Information

ADCA Research Project

Based on current studies the Association recommends that the breeding of short-legged X (to) short-legged animals be avoided because of a genetic condition existing in some Dexters.

Should you have the misfortune of having a 'bulldog' calf please immediately contact:

Dr. Jon Beever
University of Illinois
Department of Animal Sciences
220 E RML
1201 W. Gregory Drive
Urbana, IL 61801
Phone: (217) 762-2951
Fax: (217) 244-6745



Email: j-beever@uiuc.edu

Your assistance with this project is appreciated and will be kept confidential.

American Dexter Cattle Association Website

www.dextercattle.org

For information contact:

Gwen Casey-Higgins

4533 Lockes Mill Road, Berryville, VA 22611

Email: dogrun@intelos.net

Phone: (540) 955-4421

Sales requirements for semen

Advertising pertaining to the sale of semen in the **Bulletin** requires one to state the height of the bull from the shoulder to the ground and the age at which the height was recorded. The bloodtype for any bull being used out-of-herd A.I. must be on file with the ADCA.

Bulletin deadlines for advertisements/articles

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Date due by</u>
Summer	May 1st
(June/July/August)	
Autumn	August 1st
(September/October/November)	
Winter	November 1st
(December/January/February)	
Spring	February 1st
(March/April/May)	

Advertising

Classified advertisements of Dexter cattle or Dexter semen are \$15.00 for up to a 2" column ad or \$50.00 per year for four issues. Ads over 2" up to 4" are \$30 per ad or \$100.00 per year for four issues. All ads are limited to Dexters exclusively and subject to approval by the ADCA. Prices for animals will not be published. Make all checks payable to the American Dexter Cattle Association. Please submit payment with your ad and send to:

17409 E. 163rd St.

Lee's Summit, MO 64082

All transactions are between buyer and seller. The Association trusts both will use their own good judgement and exercise the highest of integrity.

The Dexter Bulletin

The **Bulletin** welcomes articles and letters from the membership. Those published may be edited for length and clarity and are subject to approval by the ADCA.

The reviews and opinions expressed in the **Bulletin** are those of the authors and may or may not agree with the American Dexter Cattle Association. The Association assumes no responsibility for technical data published by independent authors.

Send letters and articles to the editor:

Richard Henry

17409 E. 163rd St.

Lee's Summit, MO 64082

Email: Rchar@toast.net

For current Bulletin deadlines and information go to:

http://www.geocities.com/rchar_d/bulletin.html

Fee Schedule

Cost of Registrations:

Cows up to 1 yr. old	\$20.00
Bulls up to 2 yrs. old	\$20.00
Cows over 1 yr. old	\$40.00
Bulls over 2 yrs. old.....	\$40.00

Cost of Transfers:

Regular transfers.....	\$20.00
Inner-herd transfers.....	\$10.00
Registration and transfers for non members.....	\$100.00
New membership (owning registered Dexters).....	\$30.00
Associate membership (not owning Dexter cattle).....	\$30.00
Annual renewal (for all memberships).....	\$20.00
Subscriber (Bulletin only).....	\$10.00
Herd Books.....	\$10.00

All fees should be paid in U.S. currency.

Names for registration cannot exceed 21 characters.

The tattoo code letter for 2001 is "L"



Starr and Short Stop on exhibit. Photograph courtesy of Starr Walkup.

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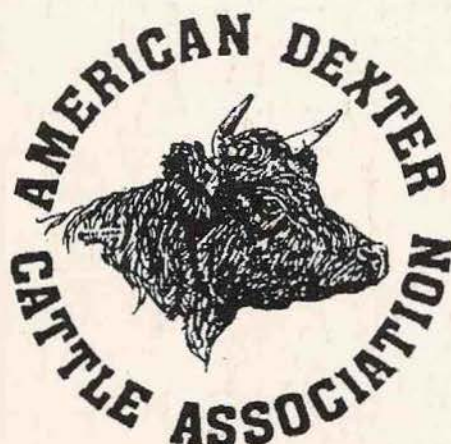
The Dexter Bulletin Spring 2001

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Richard Henry, Editor
17409 E. 163rd St.
Lee's Summit, MO 64082-4582

Address Service Requested

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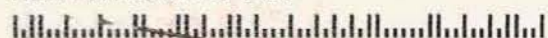


1*61*****ALL FOR ADC 66370

JOHN S. MERRIFIELD

5634 NE 12TH ST

NEWTON KS 67114-9450



Dated Material