

CO-OPERATIVE BULL ASSOCIATIONS

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Association Valuable to Small Herd Community; Outstanding Points to Consider in Selecting Animals of Good Breeding

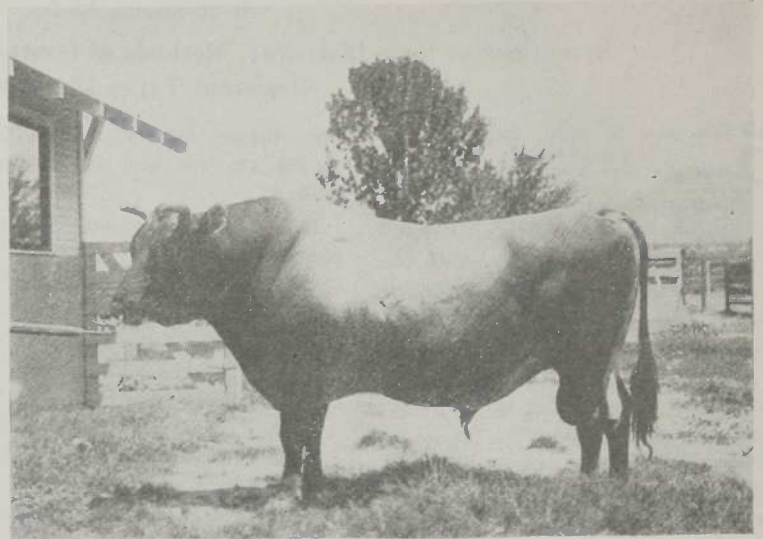
COOPERATIVE Bull Associations have existed in Europe for a number of years. The first association in the United States was started by the Michigan State Agricultural College in 1908. The movement has gradually grown in this country, but there are still many localities where the benefits of the association are yet to be obtained. Bull associations promises to become a great factor in dairy cattle improvement.

These associations are formed by dairymen for the use, ownership, and exchange of better bulls. The association is more valuable to a small herd community where the cost of keeping a bull per cow is high. The association gives the dairymen who owns a small herd the use of a good purebred bull at a minimum expense.

Another phase of the organization is the union of the dairymen in marketing their stock and their products cooperatively. There is union in the association and with it comes greater power. Some associations have advertised their stock, and by backing up their advertisements by quality and service they have attracted many buyers where an individual breeder would not.

In a majority of the instances in forming the bull association fifteen to thirty farmers organize and jointly own four or five bulls. The district in which they live is divided into blocks, and one bull is placed in each block. The bull is located at a farm convenient to the use of all the members living in that block. Often as high as sixty to seventy cows are served by the same bull. For two years a bull is used in one block, and then he is moved to another one. This method prevents inbreeding, and the dairymen have the use of five bulls for the price of their interest in one. This does away with the scrub bull on each farm, and places the use of a good purebred bull at the dairyman's disposal for the same price of the scrub and often less.

A great number of dairymen desire to gradually develop a herd of purebreds. They often start at this



A Purebred Bull

slowly by buying a few females and gradually develop a purebred herd. In the bull association a good bull is at hand to which these better cows can be bred cheaply. Money saved in this manner can be used in buying more registered purebred females.

The bull association tends to work toward the establishment of one breed in a community. In this manner a community soon becomes recognized for that particular breed. There is often found herds in which bulls of different breeds are used at different times. From this practice the herd becomes run down and there is no sale for such mixed stock. It is a known fact that mixing breeds does not pay over any great period of time.

The bull chosen for the association sire should always be well bred and selected from high producing stock. It might be a good policy to take only bulls whose dams have produced over four hundred pounds of butterfat in a year. He should also be superior to the best cows in any of the herds. A poor bull would do more harm in a bull association than elsewhere due to the fact that he would be used upon many more cows than the ordinary bull. A bull that is old enough to be proven is often an expensive one. If the records of his

daughters show increase production over dams the price of the bull is bound to raise accordingly. But often this tried bull is worth the difference asked over the untried bull. It is often well for the members of the association to ask the aid of the state agricultural college in picking their bulls.

Another factor in picking a bull is to consider his health. The animal should be free from all communicable diseases. Within the association itself disease control must be watched or the bull may contract and spread an undesirable disease. Tubercular reactors should by all means be culled out and sold.

In Arizona there is a large percent of purebred sires, but through the use of the cooperative bull association the standard of these bulls could be raised considerable. There are many purebred bulls from untested dams that are used from the mere fact that they are purebreds. At the present time there are no cooperative bull associations in the state.

Cooperative bull associations would be a forward step in dairy cattle improvement in the state, and the organizing of these associations should be given serious consideration by all dairymen who feel they can not afford to secure the service of good sires.