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WINTER vs. SUMMER DAIRYING

by

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and

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Cooperative Extension Work in Agriculture
and Home Economics, South Dakota State
College and United States Department of
Agriculture Cooperating.

DEBATE

'Resolved, That winter dairying is more profitable than summer dairying under present conditions in South Dakota.'

Brief for the Affirmative

Winter dairying is more profitable than summer dairying because:

A. Prices of butterfat are higher in the winter than in the summer.

1. While it is true that less milk is produced in the winter, the price is enough higher to more than offset this fact.

B. Cows freshening in the fall produce more butterfat than cows freshening in the spring.

1. They produce all winter and then when the grass gets green they practically "freshen" again, while

2. Cows calving in the spring go down in their milk flow during July and August on account of

a. Excessive heat,

b. Flies,

c. Short pastures, and

3. It is seldom possible to get them back to profitable production again.

C. Labor is cheaper and more plentiful in winter than in the summer.

1. The monthly wage for hired help is lower.

2. Where winter dairying is practiced men are often hired by the year and such labor is cheaper and more dependable than that hired for short seasons.

3. The operator has more of his own time to give and can find profitable employment for several months when he would not otherwise be fully employed.
 4. Winter dairying thus balances the farm business and makes possible a full year's work for the men on the farm.
- D. Fall calves do better than spring calves, for.
1. There is more time to care for them properly in the winter.
 2. They are ready to go ^{on} pasture in the spring.
- E. CONCLUSION. Winter dairying is thus more profitable than summer dairying, because
1. Prices of butterfat are higher in winter than in summer,
 2. Cows freshening in the fall produce more butterfat than those freshening in the spring.
 3. Labor is cheaper and more plentiful in winter than in summer.
 4. Fall calves do better than spring calves.

Brief for the Negative

INTRODUCTION. 'Resolved, That winter dairying is more profitable than summer dairying UNDER PRESENT CONDITIONS in South Dakota.' The Negative grants that much of what the Affirmative has said in favor of winter dairying is true, or would be under ideal conditions. However, the Affirmative has missed the issue entirely, for

1. We are not debating this question for southern Wisconsin, northern Illinois or Minnesota, but for
2. South Dakota UNDER PRESENT CONDITIONS.

The Negative contends that UNDER PRESENT CONDITIONS in South Dakota, summer dairying is more profitable than winter dairying, because

A. Most farmers are not equipped for winter dairying, for

1. They do not have the large, warm, well-ventilated, well-lighted barns that are necessary.

a. These dairy barns are expensive.

b. They cause a high overhead for taxes, interest, insurance and depreciation.

c. They are beyond the reach of most South Dakota farmers under present conditions.

2. They do not have the right kind of feed.

a. Silage is almost a necessity for winter dairying and few farmers in South Dakota have silos. #

b. Alfalfa hay is another important winter feed for dairy cattle, and, while the acreage of alfalfa is increasing, there is not enough of it grown in South Dakota UNDER PRESENT CONDITIONS to justify our recommending winter dairying. #

3. They do not have a convenient water supply.

a. In some parts of the state water for stock must come from artesian wells or from dams.

(1) The artesian wells are expensive and UNDER PRESENT CONDITIONS many farmers do not have them.

(2) The dams are usually some distance from the barns and during severe weather,

(a) The cattle must go thirsty, or

The State Tax Commission's Report for 1922 shows that there are 3500 silos and 518,351 acres of alfalfa on the 76,000 farms in the state.

(b) Suffer from cold and exposure in going to and from the dam, and

(c) In either case the milk flow is lessened and profits are reduced.

B. Cows produce more butterfat on pasture than on dry feed.

1. While it is true that butterfat is cheaper in the summer than in the winter the large production more than overcomes this difference in price.

2. Green grass is the cheapest feed we have.

3. It is Nature's great milk-producing ration.

C. Family labor can be utilized to a greater extent in the summer than in the winter, for

1. Children are not in school and can help with the milking.

2. Women, who would object to milking in the winter under conditions that prevail on many farms at the present time, will often help in the summer.

D. Spring calves do better than fall calves, for

1. They are raised out-of-doors in clean quarters with plenty of fresh air instead of being penned up in the barn.

2. They get more exercise.

3. After a summer on grass they are better able to "rough it" thru the next winter as many of them have to do.

E. CONCLUSION. The burden of proof rests with the Affirmative and they have spent most of their time proving things which we admit to be true. However, they have

missed the issue in this debate in that their arguments do not apply to South Dakota UNDER PRESENT CONDITIONS. The Negative has sought to prove that UNDER PRESENT CONDITIONS in South Dakota summer dairying is more profitable than winter dairying, because

1. Most farmers are not equipped for winter dairying,
2. Cows produce more butterfat on pasture than on dry feed,
3. Family labor can be utilized to a greater extent in the summer, and
4. Spring calves do better than fall calves.

A discussion of "Seasons for Freshening" by H. M. Jones is included in this circular. Additional material on this subject, which may be obtained by writing to the Extension Service, State College, Brookings, is listed below:

- "Raw Materials for the Dairy (Feeds)", by H. M. Jones.
"Does Dairy Farming Pay?", by H. M. Jones.
The Housing of Dairy Cattle," by H. M. Jones.
"More Cows or Better Care, Which?" by H. M. Jones.
"The Dairy as a Source of Profit." by H. M. Jones.
"Green Feed for Winter." by H. M. Jones.
"Green Feed for Summer." by H. M. Jones.
"Markets for Dairy Products." by H. M. Jones.
"Water for Dairy Cows," by H. M. Jones.
Annual Report, State Dairy Association 1916.
Annual Report, State Dairy Association, 1919.
"Influence of season of Freshening on Production and Income from Dairy Cows", U. S. Department of Agriculture Bulletin 1071

SEASONS FOR FRESHENING

The proper time of the year for dairy cows to freshen is a subject of frequent discussion. The general tendency is to have cows freshen in the spring of the year. For instance, in South Dakota in 1922, about 67 percent of the volume of dairy products was produced during the period from April 1 to October 1, and the remaining 33 percent during the balance of the year, the winter months. This indicates that the greater portion of cows freshen in the spring. During the previous year, 1921, only 27 percent of the dairy products were produced during the six so-called winter months. Apparently there were more cows freshening in the fall in 1922 than there were in 1921. Are farmers on the right track in thus shifting to more fall freshening?

There are arguments in favor of both fall and spring freshening. Obviously, the farmer who is supplying a city retail milk trade must have cows freshening at all times of the year. But he is in the minority so far as the dairy business in general goes. Our chief concern is with the isolated farmer who separates the milk, sells cream, and uses the skim milk for growing livestock. He represents the average farmer and does perhaps 90 percent of the dairying.

There are several advantages in having cows freshen in the fall provided sufficient labor and adequate housing are available. Butterfat brings a higher price during the winter months; labor is usually cheaper and more plentiful; there is more time in which to care for the calves properly and they are ready to go on pasture in the spring; the pasture season

acts as a stimulus to production and thus virtually gives two "Freshenings" a year; and the period of low production, July and August, comes at a time when flies and heat would cause low production anyway.

The cow freshening in the spring, on the other hand, yields exceptionally well during a period of cheap production. Unfortunately, however, butterfat is also usually very low in price at that time. The spring freshened cow is almost sure to receive a set-back with the coming of heat, flies and short pasture and it is unusual for her to rally in production for the winter months. Nevertheless she must be fed all winter and probably on a very small margin of profit, if any, until she freshens again the following spring.

The United States Dairy Division has compiled some interesting facts in regard to the most profitable seasons for freshening and has reported them in Department Bulletin 1071. Their results may be summarized briefly as follows:

Season of freshening	No. of cows studied	Butterfat production	Income over cost of feed.
Spring	3,196	236	\$70.30
Summer	1,328	236	66.59
Fall	2,862	268	75.65
Winter	3,484	258	75.56
Total or Ave.	10,870	252	73.36

Cows freshening in October yielded the most butterfat, 274 pounds, while cows freshening in June produced the lowest average, 224 pounds. Cows freshening in December returned the largest income over cost of feed, \$81.01 while those freshening in July returned the least, \$63.93.

The cost of feed was considerably higher for the winter months than for the summer months with their cheap pasture. But when the total feed cost for the year was considered, there was not much difference between cows freshening in the various seasons.

The cost of roughage was found to be practically the same regardless of season of freshening. The cost of grain, however, was \$9.23 more for the fall freshening cow than it was for the spring freshening. In spite of the increased feed cost, the fall freshening cow produced 32 pounds more of butterfat and \$5.92 more income over cost of feed than did her sister freshening in the spring. Thus the evidence is in favor of the cow freshening in the fall of the year.

It must not be inferred that under all conditions fall freshening is the plan to follow. It would be folly for a farmer with little or no barn room to plan for fall freshening. He must make the best of a bad situation and continue his summer dairying until he can avail himself of a good barn, and ample feed and water. But a man who is forced to follow such a practice cannot expect the maximum profit from his cows.

The time to plan for winter dairying is during the preceding breeding season. The mistake of paying no attention to the breeding dates is a costly one. A time should be set for breeding and a record kept of the date. Winter dairying is unquestionably the most profitable for the farmer who is equipped to carry it on. If a farmer wants to engage in the dairy business in earnest, he should plan to do a large portion of his milking during the winter months, at any rate more than is being done at present.