

Beef on Dairy?

It was good to hear from Dr Larry Corah at the KSU Dairy Day, yes dairy! He was there to talk about the newest trend of breeding dairy cattle to beef sires to get a more marketable product. It's amazing to see the results of crossing a Jersey cow with a Limousin or Limousin hybrid bull. You could never guess that those stocky, heavily muscled brownish back steers had any Jersey blood in them!

Most of the dairy cows being bred to beef sires will be matched to an Angus sire (70%), mostly for the black hide. Limousin is being used on the Jersey cows. The other breeds being tried are Charolais and SimAngus.

Today there are 9.1 million dairy cows and 31.7 million beef cows. Yet, dairy cattle provide 40-50% of the ground beef in our country. They are only 16-17% of all the fed cattle, and 30-50% of all the prime beef.

The problem with dairy beef has been that they are lighter muscled, with a different shaped rib eye, their feed efficiency is not as good as beef. They do have leaner carcasses and seem to grade well.

So Beef on Dairy will be a big change, 1.4 -1.8 million dairy cows will be bred to beef sires in the next 10-16 months. The demand for beef semen will be great and is estimated to be needing 4 million units in the next 3-5 years.

There are some roadblocks to encounter, getting all of the packers on board. How these BD cattle will fabricate will need to be determined. One of the problems with dairy beef is the amount of liver abscesses they have. Probably, because of the way they were raised as calves. When a processing line has to shut down for a ruptured liver, it can cost the plant \$4000-\$5000 a minute. Another concern is the length of the carcass and how it will fit in the processing plant.

Dairymen breeding beef on dairy should pick a bull with moderate frame score and muscle, muscle and more muscle.

This is a change for sure, with sexed semen the future is bright for this to really take off. It could lead to implanting beef embryos straight into the dairy cow.

As the demand for beef is greater in our world economy this is one way to meet the demand.

