

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION YOUR TRUSTED PARTNER...YESTERDAY, TODAY AND TOMORROW

Dairy Cattle—Wisconsin communities had begun weeding out "boarder cows" in an organized way in 1906, soon after Michigan introduced cow testing in America. The work was begun in Grant County in 1919 with the development of testing associations at both Platteville and at Mt. Hope at the time that George Davies was county agent.

The total number of cow testing associations in the county fluxuated somewhat during the period of the twenties. However, reports of agents show that there existed five such associations in 1923 and eight in 1927.

A publication put out by the Grant County Banker's Association in 1924, pictured a Holstein cow said to be "Canary, the highest production Holstein cow in cow testing association work in Wisconsin." Her production was 839 pounds of butterfat and 22,914 pounds of milk produced in one annual testing period. A Grant County Jersey cow by the name of "Grey Girl" was also the top Jersey cow in Wisconsin testing work with 810.7 pounds of butterfat produced in 330 days. The average butterfat production for the herds on test in Grant County at that time was 325 pounds of butterfat, according to the Banker's publication. The average production in 1921 for all Wisconsin cows on "CIT" test was 265 pounds of butterfat.

In 1927, Thomas Welch, Grant County Jersey breeder, won a silver tea set from the American Jersey Association for having the highest Jersey herd in cow testing association work in the nation.

In 1924, Grant County had a total of eighty cheese factories and thirty-five creameries. The 1931 report of county agent Jack Keenan showed that the annual butter production was over 3,000,000 pounds.

The use of more proven sires and better dairy feeding practices also figured strongly in the Extension program in Grant County during this period of time.

The Wisconsin legislature passed an area tuberculosis test law in 1917. Whenever half (later 60%) of the resident farmers signed up, testing would be required for all cattle in the county.

Plans for putting Grant County under the area tuberculosis test were begun in 1922. The county Extension office gave support to the program and assisted in giving organization to the sign-up program. A long, hard row lay ahead, however. Experience in other counties had shown that many county agents had put themselves "out on a limb" by giving support to the program.

"Provincial prejudice and unfamiliarity combined to hinder test enforcement" in other areas of the state that had undertaken this program at earlier dates.

In June 1926, the necessary sixty percent of signers required by law was reached in Grant County. In fact, it was found at the time that the necessary number was exceeded by thirteen percent. It was several months, however, before the actual testing of all cattle in the county was completed due to the fact that the county was "quite a ways down on the list for the area test."

All cattle in Grant County were retested in 1929 at which time a total of 479 farmers lost 1371 head of cattle. The percent reaction for all cattle in the county was one and one-half.

Grant County was the first county in southwest Wisconsin to come under the area test.

The Grant County agricultural agent continued to be an "agent" involved in both the sale and purchase of dairy cattle in the county. In the interests of securing better markets for Grant county dairymen, assistance was given in the securing of both out-of-county and out-of-state buyers of dairy cattle. In 1923, it was estimated that over thirty carloads of dairy cattle were sold by Grant county dairy farmers to both out-of-county and out-of-state buyers. It was claimed that fifty percent of these were sold either directly or indirectly through the office of the county agent. Activity in this area by the Extension office continued throughout the entire period of the twenties.

About the period of 1927 to 1929, county agent Keenan was instrumental in selecting about 300 Holstein dairy heifers from an out-of-county source to be sold to Grant county dairymen. These heifers were presumed to be of high quality and according to Keenan, "This number of well bred Holstein calves will do much to improve dairying in Grant County."