

**President's Report**  
**January 17, 2007**  
**By Drew Conroy**

With the cold weather finally arriving the middle of this month, I have to admit that even if we are experiencing global warming, I did enjoy the last few weeks of what seemed like a very late autumn in Maine. The extra month or so to get ready for winter, with pastures that lasted longer than expected and less hay consumed by the animals were some of the positive aspects of this change. That said, the possible negative aspects globally of this warming trend are not all positive. However, my cattle did not seem to mind the extra days of almost ideal weather in November and December for an animal that prefers temperatures of 30-50 degrees.

From all reports our breed continues to draw increased attention, and the association registered 216 animals in 2006. Given that we found only 520 animals in our census 18 months ago, this is truly positive news. Thank you for your efforts in registering your animals. I have to also thank Sue Randall, our breed registrar, for all of her work this year. Her continued time and effort in maintaining our registry needs to be appreciated by all. I am still amazed at all that she and Lawrence Gilley did in working so diligently to get our herdbook on the website despite numerous setbacks early on.

The demand is certainly there for our registered American Milking Devon Cattle, and this to me shows that our work as breeders in maintaining a line of cattle different than those choosing to specialize in beef cattle is paying off.

Below are a few items I wanted to highlight in this report.

**Documenting Dairy Production in American Milking Devon Cattle:**

In following our AMDCA director's objectives to meet with members around the country, the board of directors held a regional meeting in Cooperstown, NY in November. A number of important items were discussed, including the value of our cattle as milking animals. There has been considerable interest among some of our members in documenting the production levels and component levels of our lactating animals. At numerous annual meetings the dairy production of Milking Devons has been discussed. However, there truly is no recent data, and certainly no data in the last decade that could be considered official data. Historic data and anecdotal data have been presented, but the genetics of high producing animals from 100 years ago could very likely have been lost 30 years ago when this breed dwindled to very low numbers.

My professional suggestion would be for breeders to use official DHIA testing, which is the one and only nationally and internationally recognized service for documenting milk production.. This service can be found in every region, and provides data that goes well beyond officially documenting milk production. Having your lactating cows tested monthly; provides data on milk components, including butterfat and protein, as well as milk quality. This service also provides a system of recording reproductive information, genetics and even the value of those genetics if enough data could be collected.

I have been asked what the American Milking Devon Cattle Association could do to begin to document and collect data on this important aspect of production. My reply to those I have spoken with is to encourage you to first begin DHIA testing in your herd. While this will cost the breeder some money, the rewards would be great; if you are trying to market your animals' dairy potential. There is little sense in our small association and even smaller board of directors trying to invent some new system of milk production documentation, when the USDA, the major dairy breeds, and all other dairy breed associations use this service; because of its credibility and reliable service. I have attached two links for you to check out and would encourage you to make contact with one of these organizations for further information. For those of you without internet connections, I have also included the addresses and phone numbers of the organizations.

<http://www.dairyone.com/>

**Dairy One**

730 Warren Road

Ithaca, New York 14850

phone: 1.800.496.3344, 607.257.1272

fax: 1.607.257.6808

<http://www.dhia.org/>

**National DHIA**

PO Box 930399

Verona, WI 53593-0399

Phone: 608-848-6455 Fax: 608-848-7675

**The North American Devon Cattle Association:**

Members recently received an invitation to join the new North American Devon Cattle Association and register Milking Devon cattle with them. (See <http://www.northamericandevon.com/members.html>). As their website clearly states, the mission of this new organization is to promote a premier beef breed. We have long held that our breed is not exclusively a beef breed, and we have maintained a small but unique breed that is recognized nationally and globally as a distinct breed of cattle. As I stated in the fall newsletter, the directors see the American Milking Devon as a triple purpose breed that serves many markets, and shows great promise for the future in all of them. However, as a board we do not believe it is in the breed's best interest to select one of the markets such as dairy, meat or draft and convince all of the members to follow that single path.

We will not attempt to portray our association as better or worse than any other. However, it is important to realize that our breed, and the American Milking Devon Cattle Association, have great recognition, and value, both of which are at an all time high.

Please bear in mind that our herd book is closed, and registrations are only accepted for animals whose parents are already registered in our association. If you choose to register your cattle with the new association exclusively, the offspring of these cattle would not be eligible for registry in the AMDCA, and for all intents and purposes would be lost to

this association. Members interested in the NADA may want to consider dual registry for their cattle in order to keep their options open.

**Board of Directors Summary**

The board of directors continues to have monthly phone conferences and has addressed issues relating to breed promotion, our website, drawing additional bulls for artificial insemination, holding a regional meeting in Missouri in March of this year, topics for the annual meeting, using DNA testing for parentage and other traits, and the challenges of finding an appropriate Embryo Transfer policy for our breed. Speaking for the board, we would welcome your comments and suggestions on any or all of these issues.