

# Dairy Cow Replacements

about 90% of Los Angeles County in-shipments in 1949 came from areas other than the milkshed

Edwin C. Voorhies and Nathaniel S. Mewhinney

Approximately 55,000 dairy cattle were shipped into Los Angeles County during 1949—largely for replacements. The in-shipped cattle amounted to about 40% of the estimated number on hand at the first of the year.

Los Angeles County has become the first of the state's counties in dairy cattle numbers, and the estimated 140,000 on January 1, 1949 made up approximately a sixth of the state's estimated 885,000 on the same date.

In most areas of the country the majority of additions or replacements for herds are obtained by raising calves and by purchasing animals from neighbors. In Los Angeles and other southern California counties, a large part of the dairy cows are shipped in from more distant counties of the state and from other states.

Of the total in-shipments in 1949 only 3,572 or 6% could be identified as originating in the Los Angeles milkshed. The remaining counties of the state furnished 24,190 or 44% of all receipts.

In 1949 Kings, Tulare, Stanislaus and Merced counties furnished the larger numbers. States west of the Mississippi, other than California, shipped 21,306 animals or 39%. The balance of 5,864 animals, about 11%, was received through the stockyards and the exact origin of these animals is not known.

It has been possible to make rather exact calculations on the types of receivers of dairy cattle in Los Angeles County in 1949. These receivers have been classified as: 1, dealers; 2, dairy auctions—as distinguished from regular or general livestock auctions, dealers' sales yards or dispersal sales; 3, operating dairymen; and 4, a type of dealer who handles animals released from the Los Angeles Union Stock Yards.

In 1949 over 34,000 head or about 62% of the shipments were handled by licensed dealers represented by class 1, above. Individual dealer volume varied from the handling of one head to almost 5,000 head.

When the spread between prices paid by local dairymen and that paid by dealers in the country is wide a few dealers may travel up to 50,000 miles and more in a single year's time seeking dairy cattle. As this spread narrows, other arrangements are made. Some will make

connections with other dealers operating close to the origin of the replacements. In other cases relationships have been established which enable producers of replacements and outside dealers to ship cows to the Los Angeles dealers' yards.

Commissions to country buyers vary with the kind and quality of animal and in 1949 were reported to range from five to ten dollars per head.

A considerable number of dairy cow dealers are and have been operating dairymen, spending only part of their time in trading operations. Many of these dealers and dairymen have maintained private sales yards and dairies. The facilities have often included 30- or 60-cow milk barns—sometimes larger.

Another activity of some dealers has been in connection with dairy management. Various lending institutions may engage dealers to perform a dairy management service for customers whose outlook for the repayment of loans for cattle or feed might not be bright.

Other dealers may purchase the animals—especially the better ones—at auctions and then in turn ship to the dealers at the market.

Of the 34,110 head of cattle handled by this group shipments from California—outside of the milkshed—numbered 16,744 while those from other states totaled 16,278. The cattle originating in the milkshed numbered only 1,088.

Second in importance among the types of receivers are the dairy auctions. Four of these auctions handled approximately 20% of the replacements coming in 1949. These yards differ somewhat from most of the auction yards in the state by specialization in sales and in methods of procuring animals.

One such yard maintains a field office in the lower San Joaquin Valley so arrangements can be made to ship cattle to one of the auctions. This same yard has handled a large number of dispersion sales in the area.

A second yard has apparently specialized in out-of-state shipments to auction yards.

A third yard has its receipts based primarily on shipments from California and other states.

The activities of the dairy auction operators have developed the handling of

a larger number of cows originating in the milkshed itself.

In addition to the auction activities the proprietors of the yards are frequently concerned in the financing of dairymen in competition with recognized lending institutions, often holding second mortgages on the cattle.

Shipments direct to dairymen constituted between 7% and 8% of the total receipts and of these over two thirds originated in the state. Only about a fifth were obtained from the milkshed itself and of these a not inconsiderable number were purchased in auctions in the milkshed outside of the county.

The origin of animals released to dealers and traders from the stockyards is not known. Consigned for slaughter but showing good condition and evidence of continued milk production, these animals are purchased for resale to dairymen and to individuals desirous of obtaining family cows.

*Edwin C. Voorhies is Professor of Agricultural Economics, Agricultural Economist in the Experiment Station, and Agricultural Economist on the Giannini Foundation, Berkeley.*

*Nathaniel S. Mewhinney is Assistant Specialist in Agricultural Economics, Berkeley.*

*The statistical data upon which this article is based were supplied by Dr. L. M. Hurt, Los Angeles County Livestock Department.*

## CALIFORNIA AGRICULTURE

Progress Reports of Agricultural Research, published monthly by the University of California College of Agriculture, Agricultural Experiment Station.

Harold Ellis . . . . . Director  
Agricultural Information  
W. G. Wilde . . . . . Editor and Manager

Articles in CALIFORNIA AGRICULTURE may be republished or reprinted provided no endorsement of a commercial product is stated or implied. Please credit: *California Agriculture*, published by the University of California.

CALIFORNIA AGRICULTURE will be sent free upon request to the University of California College of Agriculture, 22 Giannini Hall, Berkeley 4, California. Please allow about two weeks between your request and the arrival of your first copy.

In order that the information in CALIFORNIA AGRICULTURE may be simplified, it is sometimes necessary to use trade names of products or equipment. No endorsement of named products is intended nor is criticism implied of similar products which are not mentioned.

