

aAa Animal Analysis: Balance your cows

"We have been doing aAa Analysis since we started dairying, thanks to Bob Johnson," says Gary Zimmer. It's one part of the Otter Creek Organic Farm system.

"Success on a farm is never doing one thing right, it's doing many things right. Genetics isn't black and white; many things in nature are not."

Gary notes that his son Nic, who has used this tool since he started dairying, "over his lifetime has the opportunity produce a herd of high quality, high producing, long-living cattle."

OCOF uses genetic selection system in conjunction with "taking the opportunity with the resources of our land, to do all that we can do to add to the proper breeding and put together an exceptional animal." High quality forages fed in a high forage diet maintaining a high

plain of nutrition, a specialized dry cow ration that meets the dry cow's unique needs, and cow comfort all combine for dairying success: healthy, high producing,

long lived cows.

aAa Analysis will have a display area featuring cattle from the OCOF herd near the dairy barn on the east side of the highway.

By Philip Hasheider
aAa Animal Analysis
The cows you milk are an integral part of your biological system

and are the final key to making the best use of all your farm inputs. I liken it to straightening out the last kink in your garden hose. All of your best efforts - from correcting your soil to timely planting and harvesting - are directed towards converting plants into milk through your cows. She becomes a funnel

through which your soil and ultimately the plants pass. The more she can utilize those feedstuffs, stay healthy and be injury-free, the more you will benefit.

The final step in your biological system that should not be overlooked is using a dairy cattle breeding guide that helps you create a more structurally balanced cow.

This kind of cow, regardless of breed, is one that has a "balance" body structure; that is, when her dimensions of height, length and width approximate an equal proportion between them. This balance enables her to cope with stresses relating to production and helps decrease or eliminate health problems in her respiratory, digestive, circulatory, and reproductive systems. She performs better than her stablemates with unbalanced body structures that typically have more health problems and which often eliminates them from the herd because they're too much trouble.

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A balanced cow is healthier and easier to work with because she is less prone to injury and eating disorders, and requires less veterinary attention; all things that contribute to increased profits. How do you create balanced cows? The answer can be found at Otter Creek Organic



(dairy) Farm. For the past six years, Gary and Nick Zimmer have used aAa® Animal Analysis as a breeding guide to produce more offspring with better balanced body structures from their cows. These calves in turn have grown into more profitable milk cows that can be seen in their herd today.

One result of having balanced cows is that fewer leave the herd quickly due to physical problems. Because they stay longer, they have more total offspring and over several short years, there will be more cattle than you need, and these can be sold for dairy purposes as a cash crop rather than as beef.

Profitable milk production comes from several sources: efficient use of feedstuffs, few health and udder problems, easy calving and rebreeding; all of which require fewer veterinary visits to the farm. The most profitable cow is one that over-

comes challenges to her body functions and produces pounds of milk compatible to her body size while maintaining her health. Those cows are most often the ones that also possess the greatest balance in their body parts.

aAa® Animal Analysis can be applied to any breed or type of breeding program including crossbreeding because it addresses two important questions, "What is the cause of this cow's problems?" and "How do I correct them so they do not appear in her daughter?"

Knowing the cause of a structural problem and understanding

how to fix it is the basis for which aAa can be used to create balance in cattle.

Just as you can make corrections in your soils to benefit your plants, you can make corrections in your breeding program to

benefit your herd to using aAa to make corrections in body structures and create cattle that are more durable and trouble free. Your future herd hands in that balance.

Otter Creek Organic Farm has used aAa Animal Analysis since 2005 as their dairy cattle breeding guide to producing more structurally balanced offspring from their cows. Better calves grow into better cows. Stop by the aAa display and look over the cattle to see for yourself how balanced body structures make for more eye-appealing, trouble-free and profitable cows.