

16th January, 1951.

Dear Donald,

Rothschild tells me that you may be able to help in obtaining identical twin calves for a milking experiment on a very small scale which I have suggested at the Hannah. I was of course, concerned that Geneticists having no experience of dairy husbandry, and being asked to supply programmes for, say, fifty years' livestock improvement, should not take milk records as obtained by present methods, so seriously as, for example, Lush at Ames is inclined to do. In fact, the first step seemed to be to discover how to carry out a milking test in such a way as to give a result of any use for breeding purposes. This, of course, must seem very sceptical to the know-alls, but I do not see what other approach can be made.

As regards your questions, I must leave it to Blaxter to answer (c), while I do not quite know what (e) means. I have suggested to Blaxter that his zero hour should be in November, 1951, i.e. that the whole programme should be geared to a pre-assigned date for the first calving of identical twin heifer calves. Perhaps he will say that he would rather aim at February, 1952 or some other time. All that I can suggest is that some definite time must be aimed at, and one which is apparently compatible with the building operations in progress and with the supply of identical twin calves.

For the rest, it appears that six pairs can be accommodated and will be needed for the first bout of experimentation. No use can be made of bull calves. I think that if the animals are due to have their first calf in or about an assigned month, the time of year at which they themselves were born can be left to take care of itself. Does this not seem reasonable to you?

Yours sincerely,