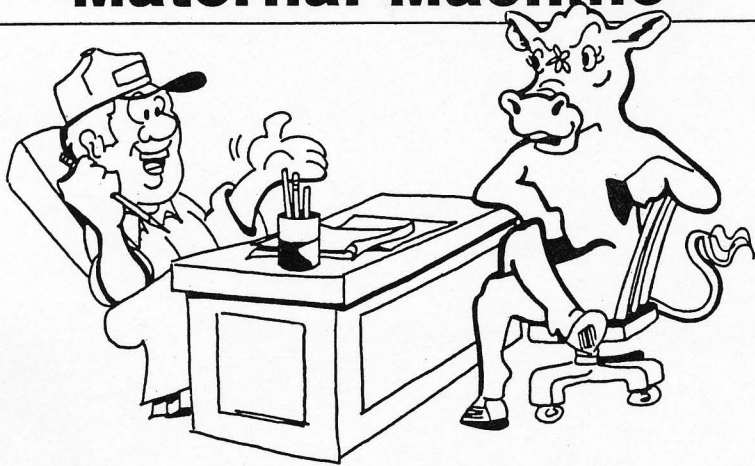


## ATTENTION:

# Opening for a "Maternal Machine"



by Dr. O.G. Daniel, Partisover Ranch, Colbert, Ga.

**W**hen hiring a ranch hand, secretary, salesman, mechanic, etc., the people chosen for interview are told what is expected from them and in turn what they can expect from their employer.

If cows and people could carry on a conversation at the time of employment, I'm sure it would be a confusing one. Why? Too many of us really haven't worked out a job description for that four-legged critter that is expected to help put groceries on our table for the next eight to 10 years. On the other hand, I doubt if many young heifers would hire on at our outfit because we really hadn't thought too much about "salaries" which is cow talk for "what do we eat?" We really haven't thought too much about family life, such as keeping our produce intact, but have left too much to chance for one night stands.

Let's look at this job from both sides of the pasture fence. I can imagine the conversation moving something like this . . .

**We will deal with the employer first:**

“If you hire on with this outfit, I expect the right side of your ledger sheet to be as black as all of your calves. Speaking of calves, you must have one every year or someone else will sleep in your bed. Weigh whatever you want, but keep your factory grinding at fast enough pace that your yearly 'gross cow product' will equal 40 to 60 percent of what you carry around.

“Don't spend all your time at the beauty parlor or health spa trying to take off inches here and add inches

there, but it's still important that you and your produce attract attention from passers-by who are serious about the cattle business.

“You must bring up your offspring in the same fashion that the neighboring commercial youngsters are brought up because your sons must perform for them or we go out of business. We cannot survive with your offspring being treated as 'hothouse' folks.

“I warned you earlier that your calves must wean heavy. They must not quit then but when carried on to the feedlot should grade Choice when they reach about the same weight as yours in your working form. Just remember when you are planning your family, two kinds will break us—(1) those that won't grow, and (2) those that won't quit.

“We can't expect two wrongs to produce a right, but can depend more on likes to beget like.

“Your vital statistics are of utmost importance in this operation. They include calving interval, birth weight, calving ease, weaning weight and yearling weight.

“The opening on this ranch is for a 'maternal machine.' If you and your offspring can qualify, we won't have to worry in the future because you will take on a 'functional form.'

“I like your looks, your ancestors, your letters of reference, etc. However, on this ranch that is only half of the requirement. The other half is answered by how far you can run on a bale of hay.

“I am sure you must have some questions.”

Now let's listen to the cow's viewpoint:

“I have visited with several of my dairy friends and they tell me their owner feeds on the basis of production; i.e., if they are big they require more feed. If they are heavy milkers they require more feed. Doesn't this also work for beef cattle? I can meet your requirement for production, but first you must meet my nutrient requirement. You can't get it out the backend of this machine if you don't put it in the front. I need a balanced ration which means nutrients for maintenance, milk, growth and reproduction. You short me and I will work with nature and short you for my own protection. Please don't misread me. I don't want to stay in a stall or drylot and have my feed brought to me—that's why I moved south. I need good quality hay or silage if you don't grow winter grazing. I insist this roughage have a forage analysis run on it. Feed me a protein supplement if needed to help me digest this roughage.

“I am a 'do it yourselfer.' I will take care of my young'uns insofar as groceries are concerned. You don't need a creep feeder. In fact, my record won't mean much to you if you creep feed.

“My folks are very proud folks. There are no skeletons in our closets. Our parents for generations have been very careful about whom we wed. I insist that it be kept that way. We will be having family reunions from time to time. When this happens I want all to be present, and all look and act reasonably similar. We don't want to mourn the passing of some who wound up to be terminal crosses. We also hope that only plain cow lot American will be spoken. Foreign languages are so hard to understand.

“This union can be great and we can enjoy the journey together. We must know where we are starting from and where we expect to go. Only then can we chart a practical course that will get us there.

“If you treat me right I promise to do the same for you. I realize that average is not good enough. I promise to be better than that by producing a better-than-average calf every year. My folks like recognition just like your folks do, and I know that if I work hard enough I just might become a Pathfinder.

“Whatever happens to us, let's always remember 'what we are we owe to others.'”