



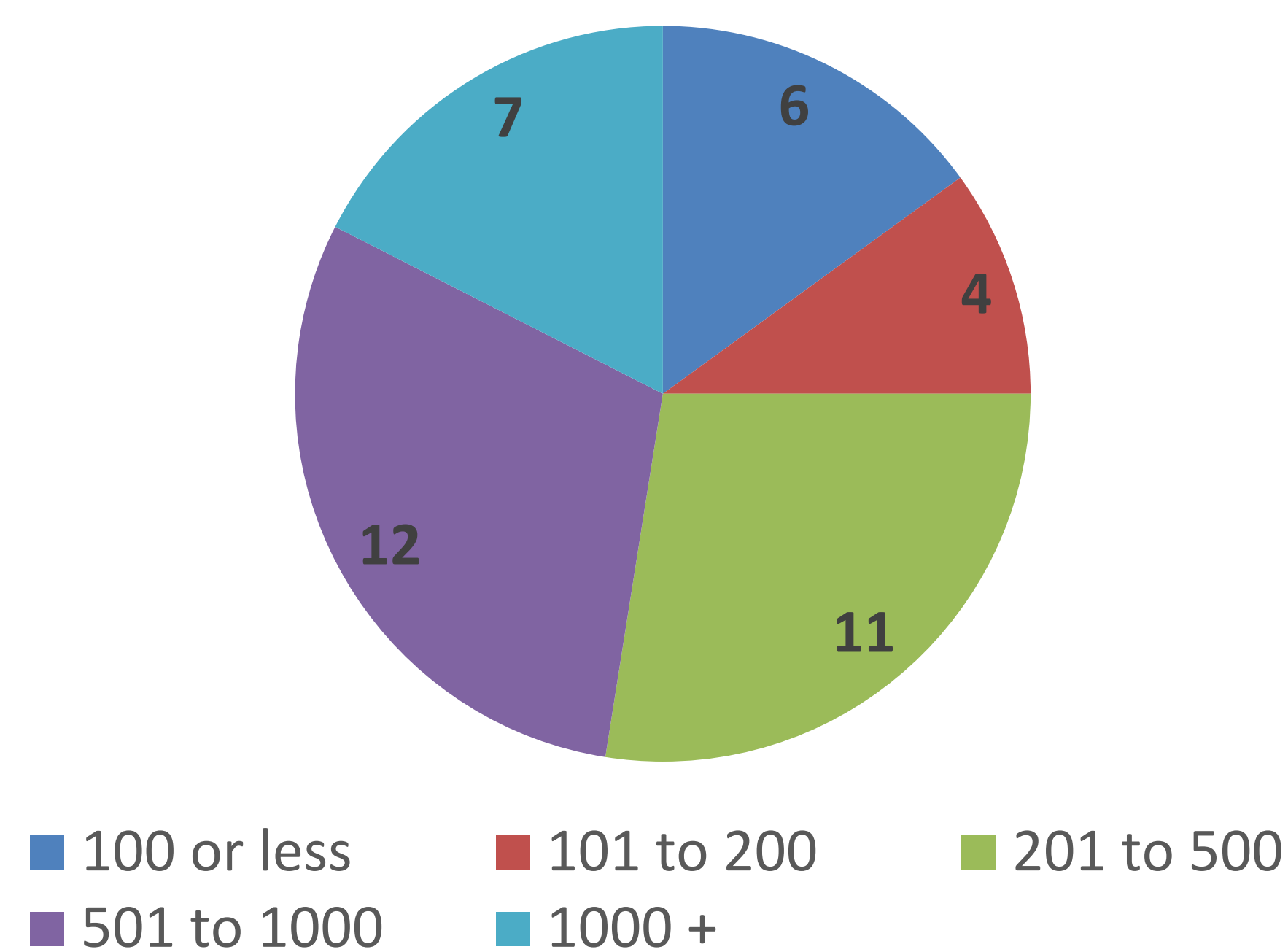
Introduction / Project Objectives

- Use of beef genetics has grown since 2010
- Beef x dairy crossbred calves:
 - Increased income
 - Inconsistent growth and carcass performance
- PURPOSE:** to assess current practices of using beef semen in dairy females
- Collected general herd information and crossbred calf management practices

Producer Survey

- Conducted in 2021
- Targeted Wisconsin herds using beef semen
- Not intended to determine prevalence of beef x dairy use
- 40 Wisconsin dairy farms participated.
- A range of lactating herd sizes existed in farms surveyed
- Average lactating herd size was 735 cows, and ranged from 19 to 7,414 cows

Figure 1. Number of Farms Responding by Herd Size (n=40)



Acknowledgments

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- Extension educators helping to collect data included: Aerica Bjurstrom, Amanda Cauffman, Caroline Ihde, Tina Kohlman, Matt Lippert, and Dan Marzu.

Results

How Beef Semen is Used

Table 1. Number of Years Using Beef Sires (n=40). Range 2-20 years, average of 5 years.

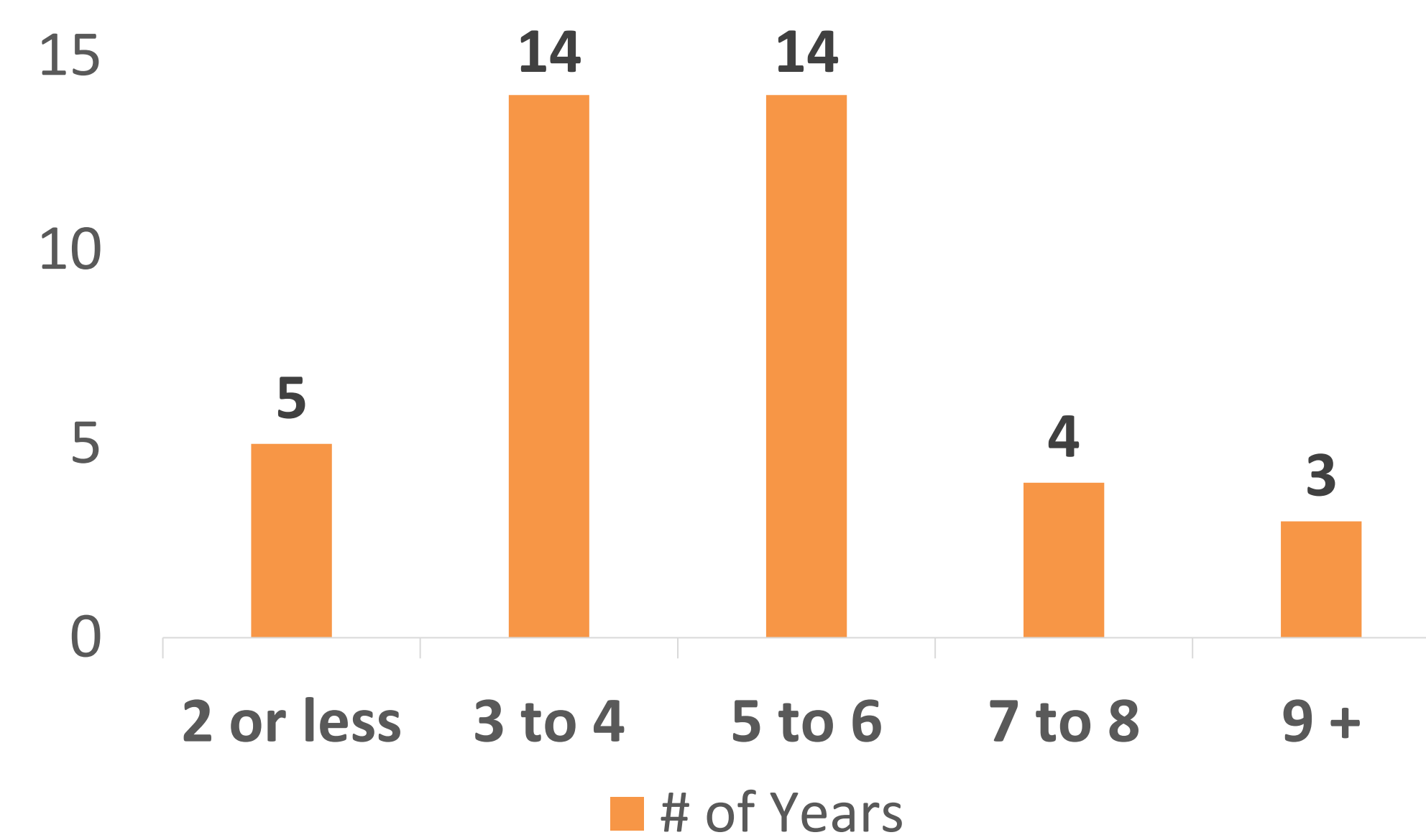


Table 2. How the Number of Dairy Cows & Heifers Bred to Beef Sires is Calculated (n=40). Farms could select more than one response

Category	Number of Farms	Percent Responding
Replacement heifer needs	28	70%
Dairy calf prices	3	7%
Beef X Dairy calf prices	8	20%
Other	15	37%

Table 3. Criteria Used for Selecting Heifers & Cows to Breed to Beef Sires. Farms could select more than one response.

Criteria	AI Service Number	Parent Average PTA	Genomic PTA	Lactation Number
Total # farms selecting this criteria	29	21	16	17
# of Farms Ranked 1 or 2	18	12	10	8

Beef Breed Selection

Table 6. Beef Breeds Used for Beef x Dairy Crossbreeding (n=40)

Breed	Angus	Limousin	Simmental x Angus	Simmental	Wagyu	Limousin x Angus	Hereford	Charolais
# of Farms using each breed	34	8	8	7	5	1	1	1

Table 7. Average Percent Beef Breed Use *within* Farm (n=40). Average percent is calculated only from herds using that breed.

Breed	Angus	Simmental	Simmental x Angus	Limousin	Limousin x Angus	Wagyu
Ave % use within farm	72	31	83	61	10	7
Range	8 - 100	1 - 90	45 - 100	10 - 85	n/a	5 - 10

Table 4. Beef Semen Use by Lactation Number. n=38 heifers and n=39 cows

	Heifers	1 st Lactation Cows	2 nd & Greater Lactation Cows
Ave	18%	41%	60%
Range	0 - 100%	0 - 100%	1 - 100%

Table 5. Top Traits Used to Select Beef Sires.

Farms could select more than one response; n=36 identified criteria, n=31 ranked order of importance. Carcass and performance traits were also identified, but by less than 25% of producers per trait.

Trait	Conceptio n Rate	Calving Ease	Cost per Unit
Total # farms selecting this criteria	28	24	21
# of Farms Ranked 1 or 2	23	17	11

Calf Care Practices

Table 8. Colostrum Management Practices (n=40). 95% of farms reported feeding colostrum within 6 hours of birth.

How Soon After Birth is Colostrum Fed to Beef x Dairy Calves?		
Within 6 Hours	Within 12 Hours	After 12 Hours
95%	5%	0%

Table 9. Colostrum Feeding Amount (n=40). Only 67% fed at least 4 quarts.

Amount of Colostrum Provided to Dairy Beef Calves (1 st Feeding):				
None	1 Quart	2 Quarts	3 Quarts	4 Quarts
0%	2%	17%	12%	67%

Marketing

Table 10. Beef x Dairy Crossbred Calf Marketing: Average age sold (n=40).

Age Beef x Dairy Calves Are Sold		
Age	# of Farms	% of Farms
< 1 Week	26	65%
1-2 Weeks	4	10%
2-8 Weeks	1	2%
8 Weeks - 1 yr	4	10%
Finished	5	12%

Table 11. Beef x Dairy Crossbred Calf Marketing: How? (n=40). Farms could select more than one response.

Method Used to Sell Beef X Dairy Calves		
Method	# of Farms	% of Farms
Auction	24	60%
Direct Private Sale	22	57%
Contract Program	4	10%
Other	1	2%

Conclusions

- Beef semen use was more prevalent in older cows.
- Replacement heifer needs drive the percent of the dairy herd available to be bred to beef sires.
- 3 C's: semen cost, conception rate, and calving ease dominate beef sire selection criteria.
- 33% of the farms did not feed at least 4 quarts of colostrum to beef x dairy cross calves (Table 9).
- Opportunities exist for beef x dairy crossbred calf producers and buyers to communicate on beef semen selection criteria (Table 11).