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PROGRAMME AND ABSTRACTS OF PAPERS

PHENOTYPIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BODY WEIGHTS AND SUBSEQUENT MILK PRODUCTION OF FRIESIAN-BUNAJI HALFBREDS

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The study reported was conducted to investigate if fast growing heifers eventually become good milkers in a bid to assist dairy farmers in selecting their replacement stock at an early age. The data analysed consisted of body weight records at birth, 3, 6, 9 and 12 months of age of half-bred Friesian-Bunaji heifers as well as records on their subsequent lactation length, total lactation yield and estimated 305-day yield, collected over a twenty-three year period (1967-1989). Phenotypic correlations between body weights at fixed ages were all positive and highly significant ($P < 0.01$), ranging from 0.30 to 0.79. The same trend was obtained for correlations among milk traits, the range being 0.74 to 0.95. Correlations between body weights and milk traits on the other hand, were very low and non-significant, ranging from 0.01 to 0.14. Equations fitted from simple, multiple and polynomial regressions of body weights on total lactation yield gave very low R-squared values. It was therefore concluded that body weights at birth, 3, 6, 9 and 12 months of age have little value in the prediction of future milk yield of Friesian-Bunaji heifers.