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HV

February 26, 1959

MERT REED

RR-CAL, RESEARCH PROGRAM, General

This will explain in more detail the needs on weight classes of cattle and let you know the developments re SJER toward setting up a uniform field coding system for data to expedite electronic processing.

Within each of the classes of cattle set up as many groups or sub-classes of starting weights as you deem desirable. This need not be done for all cattle classes. For example, this could be omitted for calves, or included, whichever you decide should be done. You will probably want to do this at least for the "steer", "heifer", and "cow" classes.

Keep the number of groups within each class to 10 or less. I could not envision the need for any greater number within a class, so we are providing only 1 column (i.e. 1 digit code, 0-9) for this purpose.

It will facilitate machine sorting if you can break your groups by even 100's. For example, one group of steers could be the 400-599 class. Thus the machine need sort out only the first digits, 4 and 5 for the group.

Send the classes in as soon as you can. This need not hold up your computations, but it seems best if the computations could be on this basis in the first go-around.

We would like to work toward developing a uniform coding of all cattle data within the division. This, of course, is with the realization that all categories of information might not apply at each field station. But we are setting up, now, a tentative field record form for SJER adapted to going directly to a punch operator. This will be tried for awhile to work out the bugs before being finalized.

At San Joaquin we will have much more uniform classes of cattle than you are able to get. We propose to provide a class code that will provide, based on age (or weight, if necessary) for the following broad classes: mature cows (3 years or over); steer calves, birth thru weaning; heifer calves, similarly; yearling steers, weaned thru long yearlings; 2-year-old steers; yearling heifers; 2-year-old heifers. Many of these class limits have yet to be defined. For cows and heifers breeding cycle--wet, dry, bred would be handled by a second code. Sucking calf age breakdown would be provided for by birth date (this

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would be similar to your starting weight classes).

It seems possible this season or in future years, you may want to develop similar classes and wet, dry classification of cows and heifers. I note now that apparently all dry females are classed in the heifer group regardless of apparent age as indexed by weight. For example, even mature dry cows of 1000 pounds or over are included. Similarly, wet cows include some very small and larger heifers, as well as mature cows.

After the present data are analyzed you will be in a better position to decide on classes to recognize and sample. We will keep you informed on how the SJER system develops and would be pleased at any time to have your comments toward the end of coming up with a uniform coding system or even a field-form adapted to both your and San Joaquin needs.

I took the liberty of changing one of your classifications. This was for the Gover calves on Poison Lake allotment in 1954. These were labelled "steer calves" but apparently were not sucking calves such as steer calves in 1958. Just what they represent is a question--they look like a bunch of bums. I thought you would want them out of the "calf" class, so I labelled them "steers". If this is not satisfactory let us know as soon as possible and it can be changed.

Miller tells me the earliest the data computation can be completed is mid-March and probably late March. Working from unadapted field-record sheets requires an additional step before the cards can be punched and slows the job down. He recognizes the early need for the information apparently from O'Regan. (I reinforced this view.)

MJReed:mmm