

INTRODUCTION

For many years, in the breeding of livestock, the method of the animal breeder has always been the very simple one of mating what he considered to be desirable animals and based his hopes on the axiom that "like begets like". However this assumption does not necessarily prove to be true as the breeder is trying to judge the genotype of his animals from their phenotypic appearance.

Naturally, the breeder is interested in the mode of transmission of characteristics from parent to offspring and it is on the solution of this problem that future improvement hinges. Broadly speaking there are two methods of attacking this problem: through the medium of pedigrees and performance records valuable information may be gleaned, or else a study of the progeny may yield sufficient facts to piece together the transmissible genetic potential in the parents.

Over the years, Progeny Testing has developed as an aid to selection of animals on a genetic basis. This concept, first advanced by the Ancients 2000 years ago and later used to great benefit by Robert Bakewell in the 18th century has in recent times advanced in both theory and practice, to a relatively high degree of accuracy. Laben et al. (1950) have stated that with due consideration of the prevailing environmental conditions the basic problem in improvement is the problem of increasing the frequency of those genes which have a favourable effect on desired characters. The breeders problem is how to do it.