

**American Milking Devon Cattle Association**  
**MORATORIUM ON REGISTRATION OF EMBRYOS**

Moratorium Notice

At the Annual Meeting held on May 19, 2007, member concerns about the potential registration of embryos led to the following motion, which was unanimously adopted.

“(a) In order to give the Association time to establish a more comprehensive policy concerning breeding by embryo transfer, the Board is directed to place a one year moratorium on the registration of calves resulting from Milking Devon embryos collected after June 30, 2007.  
(b) To support policy development, the Board shall request input from the membership based on a more comprehensive description of the issues involved, and develop a revised policy for consideration at the 2008 Annual meeting.”

Background

The present policy concerning embryo transfer (ET), adopted in 1997, established a paper trail for recovered embryos and the Register designation “ET” for animals born from transplanted embryos. Over the past year the Board has been discussing a revision to this policy requiring DNA testing to confirm the sire and dam of ET offspring.

At the Annual Meeting, members questioned the advisability of allowing ET animals in the Registry at all. Arguments against this practice included:

- Production of large numbers of identical animals will lead to genetic concentration and loss of genetic diversity, especially given the small herd population (~500 cows).
- Control of breed genetics, currently distributed among many relatively small herds, will pass to those few breeders who can afford to employ the ET process.
- Possible impact on the health of donor cows.

The major argument in favor of allowing ET animals was: “If we don’t register them, someone else will”.

Possible policy changes discussed at the meeting included a permanent ban on ET or restrictions on the number of calves from each cow that could be registered. It was recognized that, in fairness to those members who have already used ET, any restriction should not be retroactive.

Next Steps

In accordance with the above motion, the Registrar will not register calves born from embryos collected during the period 6/30/07 to 6/30/08. The next newsletter will contain background material and a survey form designed to collect member’s opinions and preferences concerning ET. Based on the member survey and other available information, the Board will develop a revised policy for consideration by the membership at the 2008 Annual Meeting.