

# The Farmer's Advocate and Home Magazine

PERSEVERE  
SUCCEED

ESTABLISHED 1875

REGISTERED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COPYRIGHT ACT OF 1875

Vol. XLVIII.

LONDON, ONTARIO, MARCH 13, 1913.

No. 1068

## EDITORIAL.

Obstacles fade before purpose.

What gilt or lacery of art can match the glory of the rising sun, radiating its golden glow upon the delicate hoar frost of the forest trees?

An improvement in yield is the general experience of our cheese factories last season, as disclosed by the annual statements now being presented.

The current theory that pellagra—that Southern disease of human beings which prevails in thirty states of the Union and affects some fifty thousand cases—is the result of eating damaged or inferior corn, seems to have been discredited by some of the best trained investigators, who now think they have almost proven that it is an insect-borne disease and that probably corn does not enter into the problem at all. The insect has not been discovered.

Appeals come almost every week from readers who wish assistance in preparing debates. We never comply. In the first place we are too busy. A second and quite sufficient reason is that it is unfair for a debater to secure such outside assistance, and not in his or her own best interests. If you are down to prepare a debate, prepare it. Do your best, work the case up yourself, and derive what benefit you can thereby. Not winning, but practice is the important thing. No more such requests, please.

Many thousands of cows are freshening now each month. If you have not already commenced to keep milk records, this is a good time to begin. Write J. A. Ruddick, Dairy and Cold Storage Commissioner, Ottawa, asking him to send you blank forms for keeping individual milk records; buy a circular-dial spring balance for \$3.50 to \$5.00, nail up a board where you strain your milk and tack the blank forms to this from week to week. Keep a pencil handy; weigh each milking from every cow, and at the end of the week total each cow's seven days' production, entering it in a book at the house kept for the purpose. Continue this from year to year and it will prove the most profitable step ever taken in the handling of your herd. It will lead to so much else.

In ministry as in teaching best results are likely to be attained—other things, of course, being equal—by those in closest everyday touch with the community they serve. In a rural district lately we were told of a minister said to be quite as much at home in a stable as in the pulpit, and one of the best horse judges in the neighborhood. Should that not help him to exert a more effective spiritual influence among his congregation, enriching also his sermon with telling illustrations from every-day life? We have no sympathy with the idea that rural ministers should aim primarily to promote better farming; but one would think their religious ministrations ought to be improved by knowledge of and sympathy with agriculture. If this knowledge and sympathy help to uplift the industry in which the people are engaged, that will be a further but secondary gain.

## Let the Feeder Decide.

From the Atlantic to the Pacific and from the borders of turbulent Mexico to the homesteader's shack on the fringe of cultivation, in the woods or on the plains of Northern Canada—everywhere in America where good beef forms a staple portion of the daily diet and where beef production is possible, or has been in the past successfully carried on, the cry goes forth—"There is an alarming scarcity of beef." A shortage of a commodity has the one redeeming feature of high prices to those who are fortunate enough to have that commodity to market, but high prices are only a detriment to the man who has nothing to sell.

This question has been discussed all over Canada and the United States, and the agitation reached such a pitch that, as recently announced through these columns, the National Live Stock Exchange of Kansas City, sought to have legislation enacted in the States of the Union prohibiting the slaughter of female calves regardless of breed, quality or conformation, and giving them a minimum lease of life of three years. A draft of the bill was submitted to the various local live stock exchanges throughout the United States, and the Chicago Exchange promptly placed their mark of disapproval on the proposed scheme, which as a well known American contemporary recently stated consigned it to oblivion.

Oblivion seems to be the only safe place for such an act. From the viewpoint of a theorist the proposal seemed to be ideal, but the producers of beef rose up in arms against it, and the proposed cure for all the ills, in place of being a soothing narcotic proved to be an exciting stimulant, not to beef production, but to producers' unrest.

To get a larger supply of beef cattle more females are necessary so it would seem that the object of the scheme is to be commended. But compulsory legislation to force farmers to keep all sorts of female calves to an age of three years could never be countenanced by thinking producers. The loss to the breeders by having to develop a large number of inferior cattle would be enormous. Thousands of female cattle are born every year that could not be economically raised to three years of age because of their inferior breeding, or conformation. Such a measure would in a very few years lower the standard of the country's cattle more than could be regained in several decades of scientific and practical breeding management of the highest order. The breeder being compelled to keep the heifer until three years of age in an endeavor to get pay for her feed and care, would be induced to breed her at an early age, and thus her own usefulness would be injured, and in the case of an inferior individual, the tendency of the offspring, owing to the well-known laws of inheritance would be to resemble the dam, and if the calf proved to be a female it is readily seen how the propagation of an inferior grade of cattle generation after generation would soon result in a race of "scrubs." Such could not be tolerated after all these years of more or less systematic work in the improvement of the cattle of the country. It would undo much of the work of the originators of the breeds, and would render the grade and cross-bred cattle almost valueless in a comparatively short time.

Again, agricultural colleges, the agricultural press, and thousands of prac-

tical feeders have during the past few years been encouraging the marketing of baby beef, not veal, but young beef. It is a good rule to follow in beef production to mature the animal for the market at as early an age as possible. Thousands of two-year-olds are sold annually at greater profit than could possibly have been made had they been kept until three years of age. This act would have compelled the feeder to keep his feeding heifers until three years of age and often at a loss to himself. If a government passed such an act it would be only fair that they provide to reimburse the breeders for all losses sustained by them as a result of such legislation. This would be impracticable, therefore such an act would be impracticable.

There is still another angle from which such a measure does not appear as a bright light to guide the beef-cattle industry to unqualified success. Would it increase production? If it did, to the extent which its sponsors hoped, it would inevitably lower prices, but this is not the point. What would be the result? Simply this. Cattle breeders are for the most part thinking men. Crops even in a country so favored as Canada or the United States are not always bumper, nor even average yields, therefore the hard-headed breeder, always careful in his movements, would not go into cattle breeding extensively. He would curtail production. He would sell off a number of his females now over the three-year age limit because being compelled to face a three-year uncertainty with every calf he dare not take the risk of extensive breeding.

Beef breeders are not the only cattlemen to be affected by such legislation. Dairymen would also have a grievance. The man who is producing milk for city or town use, or for cheesemaking, but particularly the former would be compelled to feed a large number of calves and thus city milk supplies would be curtailed. Labor is scarce and the dairyman would also require more hired help to care for his increase of stock. Calves, yearlings and two-year-olds would soon form a large portion of the herd, even where the original number of cows were kept, and as the young stock would be unproductive expenses would likely outweigh income and the result would mean disaster to the business. Cattle feeders would not care to feed calves from the dairy breeds and the owner would not be able to dispose of his overplus stock. The only good the act might do would be to turn more men following mixed farming towards the dual-purpose cow.

While this or other legislation has not been proposed in Canada it is well to have it discussed. What is good or bad for cattle feeders in the United States is more or less good or bad for Canadian feeders. Calf slaughter has increased at a very rapid rate in both countries during recent years, but compelling breeders to keep all females to a certain age is not the best remedy. Take the profit out of the business and the business will soon succumb. The cure is simple and yet it is difficult. Feeders are wide-awake men and just so soon as prices warrant the keeping of beef calves until matured to be sold for beef just so soon will calf slaughter diminish and matured beef increase on our markets. It is largely a question of profit. As long as economic conditions favor the production of milk, butter, cheese and as a consequence veal and pork in preference to matured beef so long will beef be scarce. Beef prices are now higher than a few years ago.