

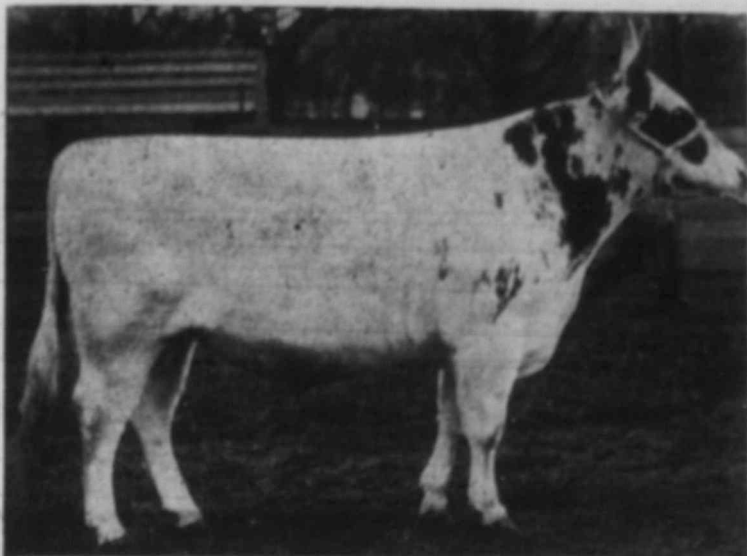
ESSENTIALS IN CONSTRUCTIVE BREEDING

It requires ability in the line of selection to start a herd but it takes constant thought and vigilance to keep it up to the standard. With the best bred stock there is always a tendency toward reversion to a former inferior type, and unless one has ability to see and select the best, a good herd will not long remain excellent. In my days of less experience, I used to think that extra good stock might likely be found in almost any herd and therefore, it was poor policy to buy foundation animals of experts as their price would be prohibitive. I have now learned by experience that a man who does not know and appreciate good stock when he sees it, cannot breed fine stuff. He may breed one or two by chance, but while chance may produce a wonderful freak, it never fixed a good, uniform, useful type.

In the selection of good foundation stock it is well to purchase as good animals as one's pocket book will war-

sires in any herd can almost be counted on your fingers. The great dairy sire will breed good cows out of almost any dam. You may or may not have noticed it, but in every breed there are one or two sires that stand out like stars in the heavens. Modern dairy methods of record keeping and the popularity of official testing have made it much easier to select a good sire, but all do not take advantage of the information given by the scales and Babcock test. Agricultural papers and Farmers' Institute workers very properly advocate the use of bulls out of tested dams whose records are high.

This method of selection of high production through the bull's dam is in itself an assurance of a high degree of merit and should be the dairy cattle breeder's "chart and compass" clearly to point the way to better livestock husbandry; but to obtain highest results, individuality, long time records and family blood lines should also be given much weight. Hardiness, medium to good size, strong constitution, cor-



"Chancellor," Champion Ayrshire Sire at Ayr Show, Scotland, and a Fine Type of Ayrshire Herd Header.

rant and from a breeder who knows his business. It is also a good plan to purchase in families. A good animal belonging to an excellent line through both sire and dam is better than an excellent individual of plain family breeding or of breeding that has never given results.

There are good individuals in all breeds and excellent producing families among all scientifically bred cattle. The breed that you like the best that prospers under your local conditions, and flourishes under your care is the breed for you to keep. If you like stock and as a breed they do well for you, it is poor policy to make a change even though some other man has obtained better results with another breed. If you are not reasonably successful you would better look to yourself and see where the trouble lies. You may find some minute detail which alone stands between your herd and success.

When you have made your choice of breeds and have selected a foundation herd either grade or pure bred, put all your ability and good amount of cash into the selection of a good sire. The best your pocket book will afford is none too good. So much has been said and written on the subject of good sires that more and more breeders have come to realize the worth of a truly great bull. Since a boy, I have always been an admirer of a great sire. It has been my dream since childhood some day to breed a great animal. In early life my hopes ran high that I might breed a great stallion, but as modern methods of travel largely ignore the horse, I have dropped the idea of horse breeding. I would rather have it said of me that I bred a great sire and had the good judgment to keep him in service than to have it said that I had a string of World's Champions. To me the sire is important and I only wish it possible fully to express my views on the subject.

The sire is more than half the herd for good or bad results, but the great

rect type for the breed, good production in the near relatives and immediate family, together with high quality—these points should be sought in a good sire.

Personally, I believe strongly in the old adage, "Breed not so much to the winner as to the way the winner was bred." If it is possible to breed from record stock and also from family lines of high production, so much the better, but this cannot always be done. To do good constructive breeding requires ability, time, patience and a tenacity of purpose.

With the beginner in livestock improvement, especially in grade herds, the temptation is great to switch breeds or sires every time some enthusiastic breeder demonstrates the superiority of a certain individual within a breed. If you have travelled among farmers in different localities, you know how hard it is to find a flock of chickens in a barnyard that are all the same breed, and uniform in type. For a while barred Plymouth Rocks will be used and when it is found that the neighbors' hens of White Leghorn blood do not bother so much about setting in mid-summer, the farmer makes up his mind gradually to work into the breed and gets one or two pure bred hens and a few roosters. These are used on the Rocks, and kept for the time being but before a complete change has been brought about, it is found that the Leghorn type is wild and gives no return in meat, and as the flock is pretty well mixed it is decided to try a third breed, and so it goes. No matter how poor a farmer may be, if he keeps chickens at all, there is no earthly excuse for not having a uniform flock. Any one who has a mixed lot of chickens for more than one season, has them because he is a scrub breeder, with little tenacity of purpose and because he prefers having scrubs to making a little effort in getting a uniform type.

After the grasshoppers cleaned our family out where I was born, we were



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