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FARM AND DAIRY

& RURAL HOME



We Welcome Practical Progressive Ideas



The Recognized Exporter of Dairying in Canada.

Trade increases the wealth and glory of a country, but its real strength and stamina are to be looked for among the cultivators of the land — Lord Chatham.

Vol. XXXIV

FOR WEEK ENDING JULY 1, 1915

No. 26

Profitable Dairy Herds from Unprofitable Stock

The Change May be Accomplished at Minimum Expense Through The Cooperative Breeding Circle.

By JAS. R. JOHNSON

THESE are three big herds of dairy cows in Canada. In the first herd are all of the cows that pay for their feed and labor, and then yield a profit. This is the smallest herd of the three. Then there is a much larger herd, composed of cows that just about break even. Their milk is sold for about the value of their feed, and the farmer receives the calf and manure in payment for his labor. The biggest herd of all, however, is composed of the cows who do not even pay for their feed, and the owner has only their society as a return for feeding, milking, and caring for those cows 365 days in the year.

If the average cow pays only for feed, and in that average are all three of these herds, we can only conclude that there are many thousands of cow owners who must be paying their cows something to board with them.

Better Cows the Remedy

There is only one way out of the situation—better cows. The man with a tidy bank account (needless to say not accumulated from the profits of his herd) can go out and buy better, and this is probably the best way. Most of these poor cow owners, however, cannot go out and buy good cows. They haven't the money in the savings bank, and the bank wouldn't lend them the money to buy a half a cow, no matter how honest and industrious they might be. The solution usually given to this man is to buy a pure-bred sire and grade up his herd. Even this, however, may be difficult. A good sire would cost \$100, and probably more. Of course, I know that wonderful results are figured for that expenditure of \$100. Figured correctly, too. But I know from experience just what \$100 means to many farmers whose incomes are small and the demands of those growing families are ever increasing. In dozens of cases it would be hard even through the most rigid economy, to find \$100 for a pure-bred sire.

Governments have recognized this situation and have been active in placing sires of pure breeding in sections not already supplied, but they cannot go far toward meeting the great need of the country. I question, too, the advisability of too much Government assistance to private business. It is apt to kill initiative and stultify ambition. My suggestion is better than the Government way; it is the cooperative way. This method has not been tried out systematically in Canada, so far as I know. But why should we not learn from our United States cousins, who have gone before us in cooperative breeding. A brother of mine, who farms in Minnesota, recently sent me a copy of one of their papers, "The Farmer," and in that issue is told a most interesting story of the work of herd improve-

ment done in and around Milaca, Minn. Here is the story as "The Farmer" tells it:

Many Cows, But Poor

"The cooperative creamery at Milaca is one of the largest, if not the largest, in the state of Minnesota. In spite of this fact, the great majority of the cows tributary to Milaca are of the



A Winner in The Netherlands.

"Jan," seen herewith, was first prize yearling bull this year at one of the central bull shows of The Netherlands. He was shown by A. Brak, and sold to the central club Vooild Beestmer.

Photo, courtesy, D. Schoenmaker.

most common type, and in many instances the dairymen have not been making as much money as the success of their creamery would lead one to believe. A couple of years ago, Mr. E. L. Westover, then agricultural director of the Milaca High School, started an agitation for the improvement of these common cows by means of the cooperative purchase of pure-bred dairy sires. The idea took immediate hold upon the farmers to whom it was broached, and two successive meetings were called to afford discussion of the matter among all the dairy farmers of the community. As a result, in February, 1913, the Guernsey and Holstein Breeders' Association of Millacacounty was organized.

"At the time of organizing, the membership consisted of 35 farmers, having about 400 cows. Last year it

had increased to 50 farmers with approximately 500 cows. The original idea was to bring in enough pure-bred bulls of one dairy breed to fill the needs of the entire membership; but an early difficulty presented itself, in that the members could not agree upon one breed. So a compromise was effected, and two breeds, Guernsey and Holstein, were introduced into the community. It was decided that one bull should be purchased for approximately 70 cows; and, acting on the expectation of having about 600 cows in the Association, nine pure-bred bulls were bought. The district was divided up into sections or 'blocks' and one bull was placed in each block—five Guernseys and four Holsteins. With this arrangement, no member of the Association, whether he wishes to breed to a Guernsey or a Holstein, is more than one and one-half miles from the sire.

Raising the Funds

"The bulls were purchased at well-known breeding centres in Minnesota and Wisconsin, and varied in age from one to four years. The total purchase price was over \$1,300, the Guernseys ranging from \$110 to \$225 and the Holsteins from \$112.50 to \$160. Previous to buying the bulls, it was arranged that each member would buy one share of stock, at a cost of \$2, for each cow he owned. With 400 cows in the Association at the beginning, the sale of stock amounted to only \$800, and it was necessary to borrow \$700 from the bank to make the purchase and bring the animals to Milaca. Last year, an additional 100 cows increased the sale of stock \$200; and it was then decided to make a further assessment of \$1 per cow on all members of the Association to cover the remaining \$500 of debt. Thus the total cost to the 50 members was \$1,500, or \$30 apiece for the part ownership of nine pure-bred bulls, the service of which, as will be seen, will extend over a period of eight to 10 years. In addition, one dollar service fee is charged.

"The block system established is the most in-



The Home of Farm and Dairy's Dutch Correspondent, Mr. D. Schoenmaker, The Netherlands.

The Holstein heifers illustrated, produced at two-year-olds, all the way from 2,698 lbs. of milk to 11,311 lbs., fat testing from 3.1 to 3.7 per cent. This view of Mr. Schoenmaker's buildings is taken from the rear. The small farmers of Holland are provided with pure bred sires in much the same way as described in the article adjoining.