

### In Favor of Aged Sires.

Of late I have heard and read many complaints against the tendency of stockmen, both cattle and hog breeders, to select for their herds young sires in preference to mature ones, and I, for one, am very doubtful of the wisdom of the custom. Calves or pigs whose sires have reached an age when their usefulness would seem nearly at an end, are usually as good and sometimes better than those whose sires are young and immature, and, in the case of older animals, one has their progeny as a guarantee of the kind of stock they will get. By the time a bull or boar reaches the age of four or five years, any hereditary trouble he may have will be apparent either in himself or in his offspring. Yet many breeders refuse to buy a bull or a boar of that age because—well, because perhaps there may be something the matter with him. At five years either should be in his prime. My father once owned a Suffolk boar which he kept for service until he was seventeen years old, and the last litters he sired were as good as one could wish for. Perhaps he had something the matter with him, but he did not show it.

Breeders might exchange aged sires, when they have kept them as long as they are of service, in such a way as not only to get good results in their offspring, but also to save a great deal of expense, for it is true that aged bulls are at a considerable discount, even if they have proved themselves good stock-getters.

A Western gentleman once told me of a plan that was working in his district, and which was very beneficial to all concerned. A number of syndicates had been formed among cattlemen, and had purchased good bulls, and, instead of giving the bull to the man who had kept him at the end of a certain number of years, the others paid for his stabling, and the various syndicates made an agreement that should their animals prove good, sure stock-getters, they might exchange bulls one with another at the end of a certain period. This plan might be followed with success by Ontario stockmen, and more easily, too, than by syndicates. Thus, the period of utility of our bulls might be extended for several years past the time when their mortal remains might otherwise be figuring as canned beef.

Brant Co., Ont.

J. M.

### Alfalfa as a Substitute for Concentrates.

#### EXPERIMENTS IN NEBRASKA.

The Nebraska Experiment Station has issued Bulletin 93, which gives the results of cattle-feeding experiments carried on at that station during the last winter.

The experiment, entitled "Roughness Supplementary to Corn for Two-year-old Steers," is a continuation of the series begun three years ago, to compare the efficiency of three forms of roughness common in Nebraska, viz., alfalfa, prairie hay and corn stover, when each is fed in connection with corn. The last winter's experiment deviates slightly from former tests in certain particulars. The corn was all fed as snapped corn, rather than shelled, and the period of feeding was but three months, instead of six, during which time grain was used sparingly and roughness liberally, the cattle being finished in a second experiment in which heavy grain rations were used.

In the experiment with snapped corn (ears in the shuck, or husk), the roughness in each lot was as follows: Lot 1, prairie hay; lot 2, prairie and alfalfa hay; lot 3, alfalfa; lot 4, corn stover (stalks without ears); lot 5, corn stover and alfalfa; and lot 6, corn fodder (stalks with ears attached) and alfalfa. As in the two former tests, ten steers were fed in each lot, and these were selected to make the several lots as uniform as possible. The steers were two-year-old grade Shorthorns and Herefords, from the north-western part of the State, where they had been reared under semi-range conditions.

The steers fed snapped corn and alfalfa hay made the largest gains, amounting to 2.06 pounds a day average for the three months, while those on snapped corn, alfalfa and prairie hay gained 2.01 pounds a day; those on snapped corn, alfalfa and stover, 1.96 pounds; those on corn fodder and alfalfa, 1.81 pounds, while the steers fed snapped corn and prairie hay gained only 1.2 pounds a day, and those fed snapped corn and stover, 1.02 pounds a day. In each case where alfalfa formed a part or all of the roughness the gains were materially increased. This accords with former experiments, and emphasizes further the importance of supplying in the ration all the nutrients needed. Alfalfa, being high in protein, supplies what is lacking in corn and in prairie hay and corn stover. Not only were larger gains made in the lots fed alfalfa, but much less corn was required for each pound of gain when they were thus supplied.

But the vital thing for the consideration of the feeder is the relative cost of gains. In the lots fed corn, alfalfa and stover, in the one case with corn attached to the stalk as fodder, the cost of



Westward Ho (87691).

Bred by Mr. Duthie. Imported in 1906. Property of H. J. Davis, Woodstock, Ont. Included in auction sale, Oct. 24th, as advertised.

gains was the lowest, being 4.11 cents a pound of gain in both lots. A little more pork, from hogs following the cattle, was made where the corn was fed on the stalk, and the net profit a steer in that lot was \$4.59, as compared with \$4.20 on corn, alfalfa and stover.

On snapped corn and alfalfa each pound of gain cost 4.49 cents (net profit a steer, \$3.56); on snapped corn, prairie hay and alfalfa, 4.77 cents (net profit a steer, \$3.10); on snapped corn and stover, 6.97 cents (net profit a steer, 13 cents); and on snapped corn and prairie hay, 7.58 cents (net loss a steer, 8 cents). The results are slightly in favor of feeding as much corn as it is possible on the stalk, though this is the first experiment covering this particular question, and other tests should be made, as is intended, to make it at all conclusive. Other comparisons in the experiment, inasmuch as they agree with former results, would seem to make the following deductions safe, viz.: (1) That prairie hay and corn, without further supplements, is an unsatisfactory combination, both from the viewpoint of gains and that of profits; (2) that alfalfa and corn are capable of giving large gains without additional foods, but that the substitution of corn stover which has been cut and shocked immediately after the ears ripen, may be substituted for half of the alfalfa with greater economy, because of the low market value in the corn belt of such roughness.

#### THE SECOND EXPERIMENT.

Experiment No. 2 deals with the feeding of

wheat bran, oil meal, cottonseed meal and alfalfa, each with corn and prairie hay, to test their relative efficiency as supplementary foods.

The cattle were half-fat two-year-old grade Shorthorns and Herefords, averaging about 1,150 pounds each.

The rations fed were as follows: Lot 1, shelled corn and prairie hay; lot 2, shelled corn 75 per cent., bran 25 per cent., and prairie hay; lot 3, shelled corn 90 per cent., oil meal 10 per cent., and prairie hay; lot 4, shelled corn 90 per cent., cottonseed meal 10 per cent., and prairie hay; lot 5, shelled corn and equal parts of alfalfa and prairie hay; lot 6, corn and cob meal, and equal parts of alfalfa and prairie hay.

It may be said in explanation of lot 6 that this ration was introduced in order to secure data on the value of corn and cob meal, as compared with shelled corn.

As the cattle in the experiment had previously been fed as high as seventeen pounds of grain a day, they were started on that amount in experiment No. 2, February 15th, 1906. Near the close, eight weeks later, the steers in the several lots were each receiving a daily allowance as follows: Lot 1, 22½ pounds; lot 2, 27 pounds, and lots 3, 4, 5 and 6, each 25 pounds. All lots except 1 and 6 could have been fed 27 pounds. The steers in lot 1, given corn and prairie hay, were not as hearty feeders as others, which has also been true in former experiments, no doubt because of the one-sided nature of the ration. The presence of ground cob in lot 6 seemed also to prevent that lot from eating as much corn as



Bellerophon of Dalmeny.

Bred by Earl of Rosebery, K. G. Imported in 1906 by H. J. Davis, Woodstock, Ont. In his sale offering, October 24th.