

# CATTLE FEEDING ON MANITOBA FARMS

As in many other industries and events history repeats itself in the matter of cattle feeding. The first settlers of Manitoba were impressed with the advantages of cattle raising on account of the profuseness of the grass, the ease with which grass could be grown and the abundance of straw. But the extremely limited nature of the market placed a handicap upon the cattle feeding industry that only time with increasing population could lift. So we have been passing through a stage of lethargy and depression in the stock raising business while the industry of grain raising has been expanding and bringing people to our farms, towns and cities to create a home market for meat products.

Allowing industrial agricultural development to proceed along the line of least resistance, for that is the most economical way, it is at once evident that the less extensive methods of farming should precede the more intensive methods when stock is raised and grain grown to feed them. True, the pastoral pursuits are peculiar to new countries where land is plentiful and labor scarce, but only are they feasible where cheap and ample transportation facilities are associated with wide pastures. If Western Canada had had a sea coast, stock raising would have developed to a much greater extent than it ever did before grain growing became an established industry. But failing of a sea port, and always certain of the expense of rail transportation to the Atlantic the stockraising industry necessarily had to give way to grain growing until such times as conditions demanded a more intensive use of the soil. These times are now here.

From the nature of the change it is evident that it could not come suddenly, so we have had isolated instances of farmers engaged quite extensively in the modern system of cattle feeding for some years and the numbers of farmers so engaged is increasing every year.

About the year 1905 the FARMER'S ADVOCATE, anticipating the expansion in the cattle feeding business, began giving special publicity to the work of some of those engaged in extensive and intensive feeding. Details of the operations of Galloways, of Gladstone, who were carrying about one hundred head of Jackson and Cook and Grayson, of Newdale, of Clark of Roundthwait, who were working out the winter cattle feeding problem were published to illustrate what some were doing, and to induce others to make the effort. Since that time one and another have been embarking, until today bunches are to be found in various parts of Manitoba and Eastern Saskatchewan, where before only a few head could be picked up. Also in Alberta the winter cattle feeding industry has so expanded that upwards of 10,000 head of export cattle were fitted during the past winter. Nor does the increase in production adversely affect the price.

## DOES IT PAY?

The question which naturally arises in every person's mind is "Does winter feeding of cattle pay?" and the answer to that question is "It depends." Nothing could be a greater folly than for everyone to go into cattle feeding irrespective of the suitability of his place and himself for the carrying out of the operation. All men have not farms adapted to stock feeding and many men are by nature not qualified for stock feeding. A man must first have a farm that suits and a natural bent that fits him especially for the business. Probably 75 per cent. of the farmers now resident in this country are not in a position either on account of the peculiarities of their farms or their own natural tendencies, to embark in a cattle feeding enterprise. But to those who are, these remarks are addressed, and also to those who are growing up, and who, though they may not have any particular desire to know about

cattle feeding, will be forced by the changing conditions of the times to acquire some acquaintance with this branch of farming.

What are these natural conditions of soil and location that make stock feeding practicable? First shelter by bluff or a bluff and ravine or by a bluff and shed. Stables are not required. In fact indoor feeding of mature cattle is an EXPENSIVE FALLACY. Cattle do better out of doors. This applies to all except young stock and milch cows, and we are not certain if these would not be better in a shelter of bluff and ravine than in about nine of the stables out of every ten where they are kept for "comfort." When natural shelter of bluff or ravine, or both, is available then there is no necessity to go to any expense of building. In this bluff put all the straw that is possibly available, provide water and feed troughs and with hay and grain steers from 2½ to 3 years of age will make flesh out of the fodder they get.

In many men's minds this point of making flesh by feeding out of doors is not disputed, but the question as to whether or not that flesh can be made and sold at a profit is still a moot one. "How," says the man who considers the question, "can I make money by buying big feeding cattle in the fall, paying freight on them home, feeding them all winter on high priced grain, and take the chance of getting but little more for them in

and one is never certain he will not be above the average. Most of this charge, of course, is incurred on the rails; the ocean space runs from 25 to 50 shillings per head. Then add to the freight charges the cost of feed, attendance, and the shrink, and the difference between Canadian and Liverpool prices will be fairly well explained.

## SOME FEEDERS

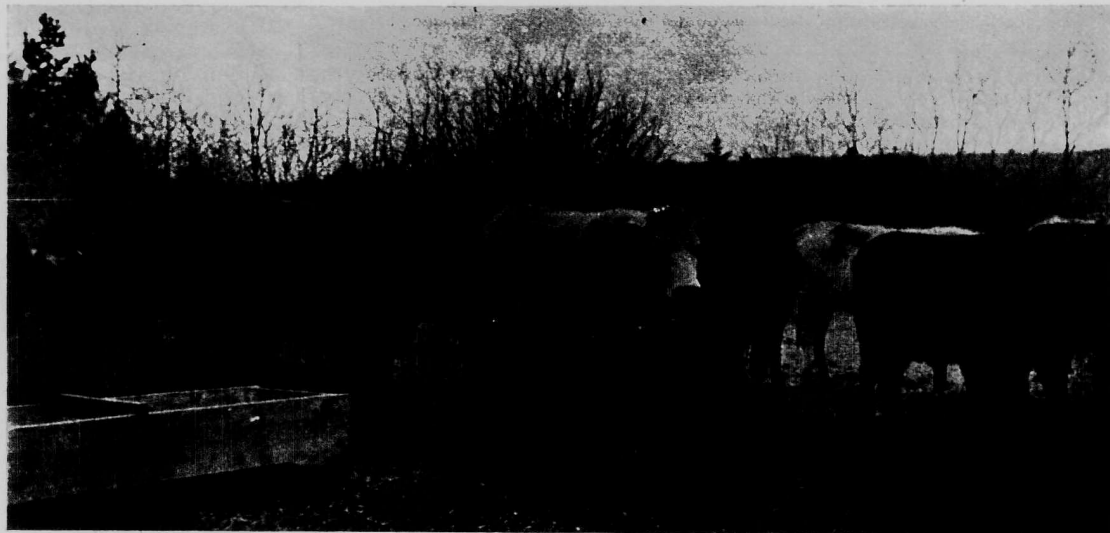
During the last few weeks those farmers who have been following winter feeding have been marketing their cattle and in spite of the handicaps have invariably made money. One such feeder is Mr. Fred Rhynd, of Westbourne, Man. Mr. Rhynd put up 104 head last fall at a cost at his farm of \$3.19 per cwt. These were steers ranging in ages from two years to three and a half, and were raised in the Sheho district. They were not the best class to winter feed, being too young and small, but the dealers were taking all the big cattle so there was no chance. At first this bunch was put on straw and afterwards on chopped barley and wild hay. They were fed on this up to May 13th, when they were taking from 13 to 15 pounds of chop each per day, then they were shipped and sold at 5½ cents off cars, Winnipeg. This is the third year Mr. Rhynd has winter fed, and his average grain per steer in the three years has been \$11.83.

The shelter is a well wooded nook on the Little Mud River near Westbourne. A shed is provided but the cattle seldom use it. The hay is spread on the ground and the chopped barley, which is all bought at market prices, is fed in flat troughs. Mr. Rhynd charges every thing against his cattle, including interest on investment and labor, and still has the actual cash profit of \$11.83 per head on three years' operations and this average was pulled down by the class of cattle he got this year and the high price of grain.

Another feeder who follows a system of winter and summer feeding is Mr. R. J. Phin, near Moosomin, Sask. This past winter Mr. Phin ran 170 head of cattle over on straw, hay, and grain, keeping them in good growing condition so as to go on the grass and make fast gains for the July trade. These steers were bought up last fall and run on rape for a few weeks, then put on straw, hay and a little chop. They will be mostly three years old this summer and are of good feeding type. There is a stretch of country from the Moose Mountains north to Yorkton, where some good cattle are raised, and this Mr. Phin scours for his feeders and also for the trade. Mr. Phin practises shipping direct to Liverpool, sending his cattle in charge of a good man and consigned to a commission merchant there. The long, slow haul from the West to Montreal is the great drain on this practice. But with careful personal attention cattle can generally be made to pick up a lot of their shrink on board. "The business has a fascination," said Mr. Phin to the FARMER'S ADVOCATE, "but there is so much risk and loss owing to shrink and a falling market that there is not much in it for the shipper. I have lost \$20.00 a head on steers between Moosomin and Liverpool."

Mr. Phin has fed cattle indoors and out and would not think of trying to fit a bunch in the best stable he has ever seen. But it is not necessary to multiply instances of out door feeders. About Moosomin there are several other farmers who feed cattle in winter, those who stable are gradually being converted to the out-of-door system.

As a general rule, in Manitoba and Saskatchewan the smaller bunches are kept inside while the larger lots of from fifty up are run outside and as these are not as numerous as the smaller bunches we have more men questioning the advisability of cattle feeding than we have boosting it. If one makes an exhaustive enquiry into the



CATTLE WINTERED OUT OF DOORS ON A MANITOBA FARM.

the spring?" Last fall big feeding cattle were selling at from 3 cents to 3½ cents a pound at point of shipment, which means laid down on the average Manitoba or Eastern Saskatchewan well up to 4 cents. With cattle at these prices and grain worth about a cent a pound, there was considerable risk in putting up a bunch last fall. In the past the conditions were a little more favorable to the feeder. However, there are feeders who made money this last winter feeding high priced cattle on high priced grain and even selling them for comparatively low prices before the recent rise. It is always a difficult matter to make a profit on paper out of stock feeding, but the experiences of many men are more convincing than theoretical figuring. And there are improvements to be made yet that should make it possible to even discover a profit on paper.

## TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS

Reverting again to the transportation problem, one of the most apparent improvements required is that feeding in transit privileges be secured. There is no good reason why a feeder should pay a local rate from a western or northern range, or even from the farms to his own station, and then pay local freight again in the spring on the same cattle to Winnipeg. The feeding in transit privilege would tremendously encourage cattle feeding in Manitoba, especially of those cattle raised about Yorkton, Sheho, and all along the Assinaboine, Saskatchewan and Qu'Appelle Valleys. When one calculates all the freight charges against a steer from the time he leaves the range until he lands in Liverpool, the figures seem to be an impossible handicap to the feeding industry. Altogether with a direct run it amounts to between \$45 and \$50 on the average,

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