



A Clear Cut Ideal of Just What Is Wanted Is the First Essential to Success in Breeding Ayrshires.

# The Development of a Pure Bred Ayrshire Herd

Something of the Feeding and Breeding Methods of H. C. Hamill, York Co., Ont.

THE ill-starred first National Live Stock and Dairy Show, also the last of the name, was productive of more good than appeared on the surface; while it failed to bring out the visitors, it did succeed in bringing out some new exhibitors who have since been in the limelight to the credit of both themselves and their breed. Men who had never before ventured away from the local shows came to Toronto and did so well that they have been encouraged to visit our larger shows continuously since.

Among those who entered the greater show circuit through the medium of the National Live Stock and Dairy Show in the fall of 1913, was H. C. Hamill, Box Grove, Ont. Mr. Hamill did not make the "clean sweep" that sometimes falls to the lot of a new exhibitor. His Ayrshires, however, did get into first place once and were within the money in several well-filled and strong classes. Whether as a result of previous intention or because of his success at Toronto, we do not know, but the following month found Mr. Hamill at Guelph in another line of public competition.—The Winter Fair Dairy Test. Again his success was most encouraging. In the mature cow class he came second, in the class for three-year-olds second and in the heifer class he was first. Since then, Mr. Hamill has been a well known figure in the Dairy Test at Guelph and it was there that I became acquainted with this progressive York county farmer. I received many hearty invitations to visit the man on his farm, and a few weeks ago I accepted and spent a day with Mr. Hamill at Box Grove. There were many features there to interest me,—good farming, good business, good breeding. I will confine myself at this writing to the latter feature of his work.

## Why An Ayrshire Man

In the public mind, Mr. Hamill is inseparably connected with the Ayrshire breed. "As we look back," remarked Mr. Hamill to me, "the most of us can see some factor, perhaps a small one, that influenced our course in some particular line. In my own case, I remember well two neighbors, one of whom had Ayrshire grades and the other Holstein grades. Farmers did not then understand the production of feed as well as they do now, and both of these neighbors fed their herds about the same and neither, in the light of modern knowledge, fed them well. The Ayrshires, however, seemed to thrive on the scanty rations and always looked well. The Holsteins on the other hand, were always thin. They did not attract me and this one incident, the com-

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paring of the two herds, I believe, started me out with the Ayrshire."

Mr. Hamill was born at Garden Hill, in the county of Durham, and it was here that he got his first impression of Ayrshires versus Holsteins. When he was 18 years old he formed a partnership with his brother, who was 16, and they rented their father's farm. When he was 23 and his brother 21, they bought a 200-acre farm together at Lorneville, in the county of Victoria.



Milking Time at Craigillea Farm.

—Photo by an Editor of Farm and Dairy

There they farmed for seven years before dissolving partnership, when the elder brother bought a 100-acre farm in Fenelon township in the same county. It was at Lorneville that Mr. Hamill came into the possession of his first pure-bred Ayrshire cow. All of the Ayrshires went along to Fenelon with him, where they remained for some years. The location, however, was far removed from a market for his pure-bred stock, so Mr. Hamill moved to the farm that he now occupies, less than a score of miles from the city of Toronto, and in an ideal position to meet the best class of Ayrshire buyers. Such in brief, is a history of Mr. Hamill and his herd.

## Mr. Hamill's Ayrshire Herd

A clear cut ideal of just what is wanted is the first essential to success in breeding Ayrshires or any other kind of live stock. Mr. Hamill's ideal is well fixed. The cow that pleases him must

be of good size, with large digestive and milk-making capacity, with good teats and, above all, good constitution and proven producing ability. Mr. Hamill is not neglectful of breed type, but his ideal of type is not that of the show rings of Scotland. He prefers animals a little rangier, more open in conformation and with greater udder and teat development. He has been working for this type consistently 'or 17 years and has succeeded to a degree that would be satisfactory to most breeders, but which is far from satisfactory to Mr. Hamill. "Sometimes I seem to have accomplished so little," he said to me, "but after all isn't it the disappointments of breeding that give it its fascination?"

And I might add, is it not this discontent with achievements that is the very life blood of progress?

Sensational records are not striven for in the Hamill herd, but every cow is expected to qualify under Record of Performance regulations and every cow and every heifer are tested semi-officially. To quote Mr. Hamill again: "My ideal is a herd that will average 10,000 lbs. of milk each year and give me a living calf. I have no use for deferred breeding to induce an unnatural milk flow. I have been running my cows in Record of Performance for seven years and have never had a cow thrown down yet because she did not freshen in time. I never hold a cow back. I believe that a cow that gives 10,000 lbs. of milk each year for five years, and gives me six calves in that time, is more valuable than one giving 12,000 lbs. of milk in a lactation period, and calving only once in 18 months."

The policy followed by Mr. Hamill, therefore, closely approximates that which must be followed by the commercial dairyman and the records that he makes are a true index of the commercial value of his herd. Compared with records that have been made in some other herds, however, they are not so large as the quality of the stock, or the attention they receive might lead one to expect. Many of these more sensational records, however, are not made under the normal conditions to which Mr. Hamill insists on adhering. But let us start at the beginning of Mr. Hamill's work as a tester.

## Joins Cow Testing Association

"I bought my first pure-bred Ayrshire just 18 years ago," said he in telling his story. "I kept private records for 10 years and have been running in Record of Performance for six years. It was the Cow Testing Association Movement that

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