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STORY OF THE TRANSFORMATION OF A FARM

The History of how Richard Honey of Brickley, Ont., Northumberland County, started Farming under a heavy indebtedness. Of how he realized the need for changing his methods of farm practice. Of how he did it. Now he is the owner of two farms, and of a herd of pure bred cattle.

SCATTERED all through Canada, particularly in Ontario and the East, there are thousands of farmers who, although they started farming under heavy mortgages or heavy indebtedness in one form or another, have not only surmounted all their difficulties, but are now prosperous and well-to-do. Scattered through Canada also there are at this time thousands of young men who are starting into farming confronted with the same difficulties which faced their predecessors. These young men would like to know how the older men succeeded. From time to time Farm and Dairy has told the stories of some of our most successful farmers. This time we want to tell the story of Richard Honey, of Brickley, Ont., Northumberland county.

Mr. Honey, with his parents and brothers and sisters, came to Canada when he was 16 years of age. His father purchased the farm on which Mr. Honey now lives. Mr. Honey worked with his father until his father's death, which took place when Mr. Honey was 31 years of age. The farm was left to Mr. Honey, and with it was an obligation to take care of his widowed mother and to make certain payments to other members of the family which totalled up an indebtedness which Mr. Honey believed at that time, and still believes, was greater by \$500 to \$1,000 than the farm, with its buildings and equipment, was worth. So great was this indebtedness that one of the executors of his father's estate, after reading the will, told Mr. Honey, with tears of sympathy in his eyes, that he never would be able to make enough out of the farm to pay off the obligation that confronted him.

FARM METHODS CHANGED

Mr. Honey would not be the well-to-do farmer today were it not that he has been a man of action and of decision of character. Had he continued to manage the farm along the same lines that had proved successful until a few years before his father's death, it is altogether likely that the prediction of his father's executor would have proved correct. It was just here, however, that Mr. Honey first proved his metal. An editor of Farm and Dairy who recently had the privilege of looking over his excellent Holstein cattle and who spent a night in his home, succeeded through asking questions in securing the following history of his farm operations. "At the time I took charge of the farm," said Mr. Honey, "we were raising wheat and barley and selling grain. The cattle on the farm were grades with a showing of Shorthorn blood. Their milk was being sent to the cheese factory, the

object being to raise a dual purpose animal that would return a revenue both from milk and for beef purposes. The average production of the cows was somewhere between 2,000 and 4,000 pounds of milk a year.

"I soon realized that if I was ever going to pay all the indebtedness that confronted me, I would have to completely change my system of farming. My obligation amounted to over \$4,000. Wheat a few years before had sold for as high as \$1.50 a bushel and barley for 90 cents. At that time, however, wheat had dropped to from 70 to 75 cents a bushel and barley to 50 cents.



A Good Place for the Hogs This Time of Year

The farmer who was far-sighted enough to plow the meadow as soon as the hay was off and sow a field to rape will now have a pork making crop that will add appreciably to his returns from that field and from his hogs as well. A field of rape in conjunction with the grain feeding is an ideal condition for profitable hog production.

—Photo courtesy J. H. Grisdian.

Seeding grain under these conditions meant farming at a loss.

AN OLD-FASHIONED WAY

"The conditions that confronted me forced me to think. I saw that the selling of grain off the farm was an old-fashioned method of farming that had passed out of date with the development of the west. I realized that the west could beat us in the production of grain. I also saw that the production of grain was depleting our soil fertility and decreasing the productiveness of our farms. This was the case with our own farm at any rate.

"Having come to the conclusion that it was absolutely necessary that I should keep more stock I decided that while it might cost a little more to buy pure bred stock it would not cost much, if any, more to raise them to maturity, while the returns they should bring in, if properly looked after, should greatly exceed those from grade stock because of their value for breeding purposes. Having reached this conclusion I decided to try it and as soon as possible I purchased some pure bred sheep and pigs. I was the first man in this part of our township, if not the first man in our township, to own registered pigs and sheep.

"Realizing, also, that it was necessary that I

should keep cows able to produce greater quantities of milk, and having seen some Holsteins and watched them being milked, I concluded that I would obtain some of this breed of cattle. I therefore secured a pure bred Holstein bull. My first cross on our grade stock proved satisfactory, and I tried another. It gave equally as good results. This led me to get one or two pure bred females. To do this I had to borrow some money, but I did it. Within a few years I had bred up enough females that I was able to dispose of my grade cattle. By this time the milk producing qualities of my cows had so increased that I was able to sell them at \$50 to \$60 each, although ordinary grade cows were selling for \$30.

HAS ADVERTISED

"Once I had got started with my pure bred stock I found my conclusions, although there had been many to advise me against them when

I started, had been sound. Although ordinary rams were selling at \$2.50 apiece, real good ones bringing as high as \$3, I succeeded in getting \$10 and \$12 for my pure bred ones. Before I succeeded in doing this I had seen that to sell my stock I would have to exhibit at the local fairs and also advertise. I have exhibited regularly every year since at the local fairs. Thus my stock has become well known all over this section of the country. I have advertised regularly also, and have secured buyers from a distance by my advertisements. Thus I have never had difficulty in disposing of my surplus stock at good prices.

"The purchase of the pure bred stock forced me to change my system of farming. Instead of what I grew more mixed grain and sowed less land, but worked it better. By this means I raised as much grain as formerly and was enabled also to grow more roots. I also grew hay and more corn than before. I soon found that it did not pay to sell any grain as I obtained better results when it was fed to the stock. Sometimes I have bought mill feed and bran for feeding purposes.

THOUGHT TO BE FOOLISH

"When I first went to Toronto and invested \$50 to \$60 in pure bred rams and \$30 to \$40 for pure bred boars, there were not lacking people who told me that there was little use in my trying to make money, as I went and squandered it as soon as I secured some, and that the pure bred stock would soon put me out on the road. It is somewhat remarkable that people continued to tell me this for 10 years after I had got nicely started and was doing well with my pure bred.

"The home farm comprised 100 acres. As the stock kept increasing in numbers, the need for more land became apparent, and I rented an additional 100 acres, a quarter of a mile from the home farm. The land on both farms was good, heavy clay, but very stony. I used most of the