



# MIXED FARMING

MANITOBA - SASKATCHEWAN - ALBERTA

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## No. 12

### Beef Raising

**B**EEF raising will probably be for many years the chief form of live stock production in Western Canada, as it has been in the past. The West is primarily a grain-growing country and is likely to remain so. In choosing a kind of stock to fit in with grain growing, beef cattle have special claims to consideration. They require little or no attention during the busy summer season. They are able to make use of straw which is the main by-product in grain production, and also of wild oats or shrunken or frosted grain which may not be marketable at profitable prices. They are also specially suited to farms that are far from the railway. Two or three trips to town with bands of fat steers may market the whole season's crop, while with grain, the same value of output would require very much teaming, or with dairying, regular frequent trips must be made.

### Importance of Good Stock

The very foundation of successful beef raising is good stock. It is not necessary that they be pure bred, in fact the beginner would be wise to start out with grades. But they should be of as good beef conformation and as thrifty as possible. There must be a natural tendency to lay on beef and to put it in the places where the most valuable cuts are. There must be good feeding qualities and good constitution. These qualities make an animal that will make the best use of its feed, will use up coarse feed, will keep healthy and in good condition, and when fed heavily for fattening will make good use of the larger, richer feed and fatten up quickly without going off feed.

The bull should always be a pure-bred, of one of the recognized beef breeds. The Short-horn, Hereford and Aberdeen Angus are the most commonly raised beef breeds and are all desirable breeds. A grade bull, even though he may be a good individual, has not the ability to transmit his qualities to his offspring that a pure-bred has. It is not sufficient, however, to simply get a pure-bred without regard to his breeding and individual quality. There are runts and

scrubs among the pure-breds as well as elsewhere, and one must be careful to get the animal right as well as the pedigree.

### Raising Beef Cattle

The business of beef production may be divided into two ends: raising and fattening. Very often the two may merge into each other, but in other cases one farmer does the raising and some one else the fattening.

The greatest principle in profitable beef raising is to keep the cost of production down. Where no milking is done, the only crop from a beef cow in a year is her calf. If any money is to be made, the cost of keeping that cow for a year must be less than the value of the calf at weaning time. Now,

Heretofore, the object has been attained by pasturing the cow on unoccupied land in the summer and feeding her on hay cut from unoccupied land or sloughs in the winter. The only cost was the cutting and gathering of the hay. Here was cheap production indeed! And so long as this method is practical, it does not appear easy to improve on it. But the unoccupied land is being taken possession of and used, the hay sloughs are drying up and many of them can be plowed and made to grow more valuable crops. Consequently, in many districts it is no longer possible to raise cattle in the free and easy way of the past, they must be fed off arable land or not at all. The

farming and the grasses used in the rotation may be used for pasture after being cut or may be pastured the whole season.

For winter feed, the grade beef cow must be expected to use a large amount of straw. On a grain farm, straw is not considered to have any value, consequently the more straw the cow can use up, the more she cheapens the cost of her maintenance. However, no animal should be expected to live on straw alone. It is very bulky non-nutritious food. Cattle need such bulky feeds, but they cannot thrive without something more nutritious as well. What this should be will depend on other circumstances. When oats are cheap and a long haul is required to deliver them, they may be fed to breeding cattle, but often in more favorable locations for grain marketing, the feeding of marketable oats to breeding stock would be too expensive. Some of the millions of bushels of wild oats grown in the West might very well be used for this purpose. Shipped with wheat, these wild oats bring no revenue to the farmer, on the contrary they are a cause of loss through reduced grade, dockage and freight. If he fanned them out he would get more for his wheat and the wild oats would make very fair feed for cattle. Shrunken or frozen grain and wild buck wheat seeds can be used in the same way.

The use of corn makes possible the lessening of the cost of beef raising. Used as a substitute for summer fallow, corn makes considerable saving in farm operations that its actual cost may be counted as very low. It produces a heavy crop of fodder that is found to be most satisfactory for wintering stock.

### Fattening

Fattening may be simply a continuation of the raising process and with good pastures sometimes grass-fed stock is turned off in very good shape. It may, on the other hand, take the form of more rapid finishing process through more liberal feeding of stronger foods. In the early days, grass finished cattle were, and in the outlying parts, they are still, the chief output, but as the country becomes more farmed and less ranching, the pasture is no longer good enough or cheap enough for fattening.



A Fine Prospect in Beef and Brain.

the value of an ordinary grade calf when it is weaned is not very much, so that if a man is to make any money off him, his mother's feed and shelter must not cost much. A pure-bred calf that will sell for a good price for breeding purposes will justify a more expensive style of care for the mother, and puts the whole plan of operations on a different basis, but the majority of farmers will not be breeders of registered stock so that they must figure on keeping each cow for less than the value of the calf. How is this to be done? It is not to be accomplished by starvation; many have tried it and have gradually destroyed the beefing qualities of their stock. Then, if the cow is starved the calf will be stunted and the price obtained for the cow's keep reduced so that nothing is gained. Clearly, cheapness of production is not to be gained by stinting the cow's allowance of feed. The cow must get plenty, but that plenty must be obtained at small cost.

question then is to provide them with suitable feed without much expense. On most farms there is a piece of broken or rough land that may be used to advantage as permanent pasture. The productiveness of this pasture can usually be increased by breaking up the best spots and sowing in Brome grass. But it is not advisable to be dependent on permanent pasture alone unless the area is very large. In midsummer it gets rather bare and dry. The summer fallow can often be made to help out in the providing of pasture. In moister districts it may be sown with oats and pastured, or sown with rape in rows for pasture. These practices are only permissible where there is a good supply of moisture. In dry districts the bare fallow is essential. However, the same system can be followed in growing pasture except that it cannot be considered as a substitute for summer fallow. Pasture may also be provided by growing grasses. Rotation of crops is needed in mixed

The age-tended dependence on farming. When they prevail get their future on the years. Next of the years on similar to where they their own li about six m ing to bring other end of duction of 1 young calf from birth about a year with its tend Which type animal to tl is best, depen ing curcums. When fatt a different must be adop the best for ance. Then keep the anim and in good must be forc fresh and com is required fatten an exc assimilated a excess made t rains. In mai is to keep the good conditio little feed as p

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