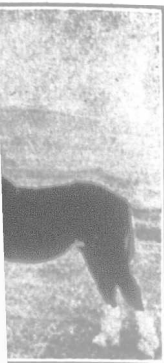


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at large of those societies which in the past have been weighed in the balance and not found wanting. There is still an immense scope for their usefulness, for they still retain their power to attract, and there can be no doubt that so long as they are ably and judiciously administered they will be accorded, in no half-hearted manner, the support of the nation at large, and will thus be enabled to maintain that prestige which they have striven for and won in the past.

For the Improvement of the Larger Shows.

EDITOR FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

Your idea of getting the views of stockmen on the large shows, is I think a good one. Winnipeg, Brandon and their, until lately, silent sister Regina, are all to have great exhibitions this summer. Already many stockmen and farmers are making preparations to attend at least one of these great opportunities of instruction, and may I add amusement?

To the stockman who often lives in an out-of-the-way district, the instruction gained by attending one of these large fairs is enormous. He then sees other breeds of stock, different from those with which he is familiar, breeds of which, perhaps at one time he knew nothing. He finds them to possess good points, which his own favorites do not possess. Of his own particular breed he sees specimens which send him home with new ideas.

Hardly less in importance is the side of the show devoted to amusement. When a man has lived in an out-of-the-way place for five, ten, or twenty years, as many of us have done, he is apt to feel himself like "Jack" to be a "dull boy" if he does not occasionally visit "Vanity Fair," and there learn, that perhaps he has been taking himself and life too seriously.

One of the main disadvantages of these large shows, is the lack of what one might call local competition. The classes are filled to such a large extent by importers: even the local stockmen exhibitors, so often show, not their own stock, but something they have perhaps quite recently bought. A stockman, unless he owns a straight purebred stock, of which he will sell any or every animal, hesitates to get his young things into show condition, knowing well that if he does so, their chances of ever becoming regular breeders are thereby made extremely slim.

In the classes for horses, for example, ask any horseman you like, and he will tell you that a horse to be in the best physical condition should have, say, not more than half an inch of flesh on his ribs; that in this condition, he will do more work, and if a stallion, sire more and better colts. Yet the same man will tell you, that to take a prize, a horse must be just about as fat as it is possible to make him! Fat, like charity, covers a multitude of faults or sins as the case may be, and we all, every one of us are more or less deceived by it. It also works harm in setting up as an ideal the fat horse—a fat man is bad; a fat dog worse; but a fat horse is the worst of all, because of the exertions required of him.

However, in our heart of hearts, no matter how wisely we may declaim against it, we all like to see stock in show condition, and to the stockmen these shows give the opportunity, of seeing just what can be done in this line, without running the risk on their own breeding stock. Just another case, Mr. Editor, of when the farmer wins and the gambler loses.

Another great chance for the stockman or farmer, at these places, is the opportunity of cultivating his powers of observation. I regret to say that I have had few opportunities of attending these large shows, but my neighbors often go, and when I question them on their return, they can very seldom give anything like an accurate description of what they have seen.

You remember the story of the Scotch professor, who on passing round to his chemistry class a mug of vile smelling and worse tasting stuff, dipped his finger in the mug, told the class to do likewise, and tell him what the stuff was. When his pupils had all nearly poisoned themselves, the professor remarked, "Gentlemen, you should cultivate your powers of observation! Had you done so, you would have noticed that the finger I dipped in the mug, was not the finger I put in my mouth!"

I think you will agree with me that the man who does not use his powers of observation to better effect than to merely be able to tell at what hotel he stayed, or what horse took first prize, does not make the most of his opportunities.

I should think that a popular innovation would be the making of competitions, such as we sometimes see at the smaller shows, for instance a prize for the most quickly harnessed and hitched team. Also a few more classes for local stock, from which large breeders and importers were barred.

I will close by saying that if I have the luck to visit any of these shows this summer, I intend to do as my wife tells the boys to do when they leave home, *Keep your eyes and ears wide open.*

G. H. BRADSHAW.

DEAR SIR:

The FARMER'S ADVOCATE is a very valuable paper; it certainly helps a great many farmers out.

Tantallon.

T. KOLBUNSON.

Grading-up Too Tedious.

EDITOR FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

Your June 19th issue contains an article by R. M. E. P. on "Records of Graded Stock." His remarks are interesting; also his table of records.

The chief trouble found in getting graded-up animals recorded is the length of time it takes to do so, which according to your correspondent and his table worked out, it takes not less than seventeen years and might take thirty if fillies did not result pretty often as a dam's first foal. The length of time it takes to get the right number of crosses, is almost fatal I think, to success, and few farmers would care to keep a record of their mares for so long a time.

I don't think it would be altogether wise to make registration of graded-up stock any easier, as we are altogether different in Canada here to what they are in the older countries, where their stock are practically pure whether they are recorded or not. Our foundation is usually scrub and it will take four or five crosses to get them at all pure.

In regard to having printed forms for use in this connection I am not sure that such are needed. All that is required is the name of the mare and name and number of the registered horse she is bred to. A piece of ordinary paper and a pencil are all that are required to make this a safe record, or if anyone cared, they could use the ordinary application form in use by the breed societies, notably the Clydesdale, and starting down at the fifth dam could work up to first dam and have everything necessary for the entry. The whole difficulty, it appears to me, resolves itself into this: The length of time it takes to get the right number of crosses and the carelessness of breeders in keeping a record of breeding, simple as it certainly is.

JOHN GRAHAM.

Hawthorn Bank, Carberry, Man.

STOCK

(Contributions invited. Discussions welcomed.)

Progress of the Beef Commission.

EDITOR FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

The Beef Commission has now completed about half its sittings in Alberta and it is needless to say that much valuable information has been secured from all classes of men engaged in the cattle industry. The producer, dealer, shipper, transportation company and consumer have each been given a hearing; from the large rancher who has from ten to thirty thousand head down to the man who feeds one steer; from the large retail meat corporations who own shops in every town and city to the local butcher selling meat in the hamlet.

There are two aspects of the question which the Commission is asked to investigate. The first and to most people not the least important is the retail trade of the province. An unpleasant feature here is that the good stock is all exported and the inferior, or what is called butcher stuff, kept at home. Not only do the consumers of meat in the province have to buy a poor quality of meat, but the prices charged are such as would warrant them securing the choicest meat on any market. On examining the different butchers, counsel went into the minutest details of their business, first obtaining from them the price paid on foot for the animal, the amount the same animal would dress on the block, the cost of putting that animal on the block and, finally, the weight and prices of the various retail cuts. There was a lack of uniformity in the information obtained from these men, but in no case did the man less than twenty-five per cent. on the money invested and in some cases he realized over one hundred per cent. Therefore we feel that the consumer has two serious grievances: first, the poor quality of meat which he is obliged to use; second, the exorbitant price which he is asked to pay for this meat.

The other aspect of the meat industry is a broader one, and may be said to be of a national character. We raise some of the finest cattle in the world and yet, on account of the facilities for transportation, these same animals arrive at their market in the worst possible condition. The long train haul necessarily means abuse to the animals. It takes almost a month for an Alberta raised steer to reach the Liverpool market. In the first place he is a wild, range-fed animal and

does not take kindly to the strange conditions afforded him on his railway journey. In most cases the engineers are not too careful of the precious loads which they are hauling, thus adding materially to the animals' discomfort. In many of the witnesses examined the report was the same, that the abusive treatment the animals received at the hands of the engineers was appalling, thus rendering the meat in a bruised and deteriorated condition when it was found on the hooks in the Old Country market. It is a pity to see our cattle brought to such a prime state or, in other words, made into a finished article and then depreciate so in value before being exposed for sale. This, we believe, is the one great reason why there is such a prejudice against Canadian meat in the British market and if it is to compete and hold its place with the American, Argentine and Australian meat it cannot arrive in the British market in too good condition. It is not the consumer, the transporter or the dealer that must bear the loss caused by this deterioration in meat but the producer at the other end of the line. Therefore we believe that active steps must be taken if Western Canadian beef is to establish a market for itself in the Old Country. We believe that the question of a combine amongst buyers, if such exists, is petty in comparison with this broader aspect of the case. Too many people are of the opinion that the Government's wish is to prosecute certain people engaged in some branches of the cattle industry. This is far from the case, the object being to make an honest inquiry into existing conditions and, if possible, as a result of this inquiry make recommendations such as will be a detriment to no one interested in the industry and yet improve the conditions of the great mass of people who are really the wealth producers of the country.

At the different sittings the council has solicited opinions as to the advisability of shipping Canadian meat by cold storage. With the exception of two or three men the proposition has been looked upon with greatest favor, the ranchers stating that they believed the scheme could be worked successfully by the Government and if such a scheme were undertaken the invariable answer was that they (the ranchers) would take advantage of it. One or two men stated that the offal was worth practically nothing in this country and that the extra price received for the animals on foot in the Old Country was sufficient to pay the passage across the ocean.

This is a very broad question and one that will require a great deal of investigation and thought before any reliable and useful information can be given.

The system of brand inspection is on the poorest possible basis. In very many cases the ranchers stated that the brand inspector would sit in his office and ask the shipper for a list of brands without ever seeing the cattle that were shipped. As a result of such loose inspection Mr. Patterson, the Brand Inspector at Winnipeg, was able last year to detect no less than one hundred and seventy-five stray cattle in the season. However, it is not difficult to account for such a condition of affairs. The brand inspectors are paid the small sum of five cents per head for inspecting without either railway transportation or other necessary expenses. Sometimes brand inspectors are obliged to pay \$5.00 for expenses in order to inspect a car-load of cattle. Brand inspectors not being liberally paid for their work, it is difficult to secure competent men. Mr. Patterson is at present paid by the Western Stock Growers' Association. A number of people have suggested that he be paid by the Government as he is a public servant inspecting all cattle which go through Winnipeg, whether belonging to members of that association or not.

With regard to the mutton and pork industries, very little information has been derived as yet, the few people who are raising sheep and hogs being quite satisfied with the markets. An enormous amount of pork is being imported from the United States annually and if these people can afford to pay the expenses of delivering in Alberta, surely the farmers of this province will find hog raising a profitable business with the present low prices of oats and barley.

H. A. CRAIG.

Alpine Company.

Dear Sirs—Please send my paper here instead of to Swift Current. There is no farming here, but I cannot get along without the FARMER'S ADVOCATE, even from the summit of the Rocky Mountains.

H. A. SCHUMANN.