

## Export Cattle on a Hundred-Acre Farm

If our trade in export cattle is to develop and grow as it should, a great deal will depend upon the attitude of the average farmer towards it. From the statements made frequently in our weekly market reports as to the large number of unfinished and inferior cattle offered we are inclined to the view that the average cattle feeder or farmer on a hundred acre farm either does not know how to raise and fit cattle properly for export, or is totally indifferent as to the needs of this important trade. This should not be. Every farmer should give this matter more or less attention. And what we mean by this is not that he should make his whole business that of raising cattle for the British market, but that he could very well combine it with his other branches of farming. There can be no doubt but that the best line of farming for the bulk of the farmers in the older provinces of the Dominion is mixed farming. And, as the facts stated in this article elsewhere show, every farmer on the average hundred-acre farm could raise several cattle for export every year without interfering very much with his other farming operations. Nearly every farmer raises a few steers every year, the bulk of which are sold to the local butcher or drover when only half-matured and for about half what they should bring if the right breeding methods had been adopted and proper methods of feeding and raising the calves had been followed. If the average farmer is going to raise cattle for beef purposes at all, let him do it in the best way, and in a way that will bring him the most money.

With the object of obtaining some practical information of value along this line we wrote to several of our leading breeders and feeders for their views on this subject, and are pleased to be able to give the following extracts from some of the replies received. These replies, as will be seen, are from four different counties where beef-raising has been made more or less of a specialty. A prominent feeder of Wellington county says:

"Replying to yours of the 8th, *re* farming, cattle-raising and fattening, I would say that, as I view it, the business of farming in this country appears to be shaping itself in the matter of an ever-increasing and growing trade with Great Britain. Keeping in view the rapid and relative growth of the cities and towns as compared with the producing capacity in the United States, and bearing in mind that already there is a noticeable falling off in the number of cattle of that country, it would appear that there are better prospects for doing more business and a better paying business along the lines of supplying the British markets with meat products than for some years. On the other hand, it is pretty generally conceded, by those who are in a position to know, that Canada has got to the limit of what it is likely to do in the matter of supplying the British market with cheese. Looking at it in this way, I would answer your questions as follows: What would be the best line of breeding to follow? While fully admitting the force of the arguments used in favor of breeding distinctly for either meat or milk, there is a good deal that can be said, as conditions now are, as to the desirability of the average farmer keeping the "general purpose cow." Or put it in another way, it would appear that the dairy business has been pushed sufficiently far, and it might be well for the average farmer not to depend altogether on one special line. There are many good herds of general purpose cows in this country, notwithstanding all that has been said to the contrary. What method of feeding and raising the calves would give the best results? When dairying and beef-producing is carried on at the same time unquestionably they should be raised by hand. Further, as good calves can be raised in this way as by allowing them to suckle, and at a very much smaller cost. The success, however, of this method will depend upon the closest attention being paid to every small matter of detail, such as accustoming gradually to the change from new to skimmed milk, occupying, say, three or four weeks. Add flax-seed tea as the new milk is withdrawn. Never allow a calf to

gorge itself, it produces indigestion, but it is well to give a full supply. Never give sour milk. The flax-seed ration should be light to begin with; say work up to half a pint between two calves at six to eight weeks old, then gradually increase the quantity to one pint between two, which is about enough. The flax seed should be prepared by pouring boiling water on the seed at night for the morning meal, and in the morning for the night meal. Use a gallon of water to a pint of flax-seed. Have milk as nearly as possible the temperature when drawn from the cow. The easiest and best way to secure the temperature is to have it warmed with the flax tea. Give grain as soon as the calves will eat it. Unground oats and bran is a good grain ration for calves. Keep the trough clean. As soon as they begin to eat regularly give no more than they will eat up clean. Give roots and nicely cured clover hay. The calves will grow much more rapidly and do better if kept stabled, although it is a good plan in hot weather to let them run in a grass paddock at night. The increase in weight with good animals, *when every small matter of detail is properly attended*, might surprise some people who have been in the habit of carrying out this work in a slipshod manner in the past. Would it be better to have the cattle ready for market during the winter or summer? It is difficult to give a straight answer to this question. Speaking in a general way, it is well to have a good deal of the flesh put on before the stock go into winter quarters. And then, as to the time of selling, one must be guided by the conditions under which they are farming. For a good many years past I have been in the habit of fattening all my cattle on rape in the fall and selling at Christmas, or thereabouts. I found it the best plan in my own case, but that is something quite different, for feeding for the export trade, and that speaking in a general way, is what we have most to consider. It is a very good plan to do as the Scotch feeders do, to have something coming on all the time. About how many cattle fit for export could be sold every year off a hundred-acre farm, and not interfere much with other farming operations? It is not easy to get at this. The number which might be kept and properly pastured depends upon so many things, such as whether making pork is being made a specialty, whether the cattle are raised on the farm or partly bought. Speaking in a general way, I would say half a dozen a year. But whatever the number, let them be thoroughly finished."

J. T., Bruce County: Your circular, *re* "Future Development of the Export Cattle Trade," to hand. In reply, would make the following suggestions: Without doubt, if profit (and that is what we are farming for) is to be considered, the best line to follow is breeding to purebred Shorthorn bulls. If beef only were to be considered, there are others of the beef breeds that would admirably meet the requirements of this trade. But, for the average farmer, who keeps a few cows for dairy purposes and the rearing of stock for sale, etc., by breeding them to a Shorthorn sire, he will get steers of which there are no better for the export trade, and heifers that will make excellent dairy cows either for the creamery or cheese factory. The method of raising and feeding the calves depends somewhat on the line of dairying the farmer is following. If he is selling the milk to a cheese factory, the calves should be dropped two months or thereabouts before the factory commences operations in the spring. In this way butter can be made until the factory opens and during a season that it will command as high price as any during the year, and the milk partly whole and partly skimmed can be fed to the calves, and by the time the factory opens the calves will be strong and able to eat a little meal; either chopped oats or even whole does very well, and with the addition of some pulped roots, hay, and chop, will get along nicely until there is grass. If butter is made, or the cream sent to a creamery, it matters not so much about when the calves were dropped, although it is better to have them early in the season so that advantage may be taken of the creamery season. In making butter the milk is kept on the farm and fed to the calves with the addition of some ground oats and other foods, as in the case of the cheese factory