



The Breeder and Grazier.

Prize Essay on the Rearing of Calves.

The subjoined Essay contains many suggestions which will be found valuable by the farmers of Canada. It is copied from the Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England: vol 22 part 1. 1871 Its author is Thomas Bowick, Stoneleigh Abbey Farm, Kenilworth, Warwickshire.

Owing to the increasing consumption of meat, and the comparatively early age at which ripe beasts are brought to the shambles, "the rearing of calves" becomes more and more a subject of importance, and worthy of the attention of the leading agricultural society of the kingdom. Not that there is any need to enlarge on the getting up of stock for the July meeting, or for the stalls in Bingley Hall or Baker Street; that is a different branch of the subject, which, however interesting or valuable in itself, hardly concerns one out of every ten rent-paying farmers. "Master Butterfly" may have his painful of milk morning and night until the days of calf-hood are long gone by; or "Duchess 317th" may pull at the teats of her nurse till a pair of incisors push out the like number of milk-teeth; and still there will be no proof that such can ever be called a desirable general practice. The question before us is, how to rear the best lot of calves, and the largest number of them, at the least expense.

THE CALF HOUSE.

And, as it is of no use to have the bird without a cage to put it in, so, the first point to be attended to is to have the calf house in decent order and of good construction. We do not say of the best construction, for the question has yet to be settled what that really is; and, even when that is done, the majority may be unable to avail themselves of the decision. Still, about most farm premises a spare hovel can be allotted, and, if need be, modified or amended, for this purpose. Believing, as we do, that calves are best tied up for the first couple of months, that they are more manageable in getting their milk from the pail, and that the least outlay is thus involved in house-room, we may simply describe the arrangement of such a building as is referred to. Take any convenient shed or house that comes to your hand: say 18 feet by 15 feet, well lighted and aired, but without draught, and the walls 7 feet high. Leaving one side unoccupied, as the tail of the brick floor (1 inch to the yard) should be from the other three sides, converging in that direction, where a grated cesspool should be ready for taking off the urine, you may divide the remaining walls into ten standings. These divisions need not be expensive. Wicker hurdles,* costing 1s. each, and measuring 5 feet by 3 feet, will answer every purpose. One end requires to be firmly secured to the wall, and the bottom fixed to the floor with a couple of holdfasts. Of course, in an arrangement such as the one spoken of, there is ample room for the display of any amount of taste or expense in fitting up, but we have named the cheapest plan which we have found fairly to answer the purpose. The hurdles have this advantage, that they are easily removable for getting the floors flushed, and the walls cleaned and whitewashed. A small beam, 4 inches by 3 inches, runs along the wall at a height of 4 feet from the floor, and into this the ropes are drawn, through which the halter-ropes are allowed to play. The small hods, or troughs, holding about 12 gallons each, are likewise fixed immediately under it. At the height of 32 feet is the hayrack, one of the common iron semicircular fashion is probably the cleanest and best, one answering for each pair of calves, so much for the calf house.

DRYING UP THE COW.

But there is yet another point worthy of attention before coming to deal with the young animal itself. The health and condition of the cow before calving greatly influences subsequent results. A late-milked lean, raking, ill-cared for beast has oftentimes an easier parturition than those that are better furnished in these respects. But her after-milking has a tale to

tell of neglect somewhere; and the scraggy, "set" condition of the calf throughout its after course, often arises more from this cause than from any other. Hence, we would say, dry the cow a fair time before calving, and see that she has something better than barley straw to live on, else the calf and its owner will assuredly lose by it. But what is regarded as a fair amount of time for being dry? If a cow brings her first calf when from two to three years old—which the majority probably do, though all will admit that it is too early—we should not care to milk her more than five or six months after calving. By this means she will grow and increase in size and value before her second calf. But a cow from the fourth to the eighth year, if in good condition, need not be dry more than six weeks or two months before calving; i.e., if fed with a thoroughly liberal hand throughout the year. If more sparingly fed, or if the cow exceeds the latter age, then we should prefer her being dry three months before calving. But, of course, there are exceptions to be met with, which cannot come under any general rule, such as the case of those animals whose flow of milk is so strong as to continue almost up to the time when the new lacteal secretion commences. It saves occasional trouble and annoyance, and is more satisfactory in every way, to have a clearly made out list of the dates of calving and other particulars hung up in the cow-house, and accessible to the cowman as well as to the owner. The following form will meet the majority of cases:

| No | NAME | AGE | BREED | No. in private Herd Book. | SERVED BY. | WILL CALVE |
|----|------------|-----|------------|---------------------------|------------|------------|
| 1 | Strawberry | 7 | Short horn | 84 | Sir Colin | January 21 |
| 2 | Myrtle | 5 | Ditto | 106 | Ditto | March 4 |
| 3 | Duchess | 12 | Ditto | 29 | Ditto | Feb 17 |
| 4 | Veronica | 4 | Cross | 29 | Vanguard | Nov 4 |
| 5 | Snowdrop | 6 | Alderney | 29 | Ditto | Dec 11 |

BEST TIME FOR CALVING.

A great deal has been said, by writers on the subject, about the season of the year when young calves should begin to arrive. No doubt it is better, as a general rule, to have the calves well forward and ready for early grass, by which means they are so strong as to require considerably less attention the following winter. But near a town, where a winter dairy is an object, or on the establishment of a nobleman or gentleman, where a supply of milk is as indispensable in winter as at any other time, the period of calving will, of course, be greatly modified; or, more correctly speaking, there will be a sort of duplicate calving time, extending from October till June. And we know of no reason why good calves should not come under the same law which the Cheshire farmer laid down for the application of dung to the grass-land. "Put it on all the year round," said he; and we would say "Rear calves whenever you have them; i.e., if they are worth rearing. If you do not consider them worth rearing, better to sell them at once at a nominal price; even such an one as we met with in Renfrewshire last year, where a contract was made by a dairyman to deliver 100 bull-calves, at 6s. 9d. per head, the buyer removing them on the day of their birth. Not that we think taking the calf so early from the cow is by any means a humane practice; nor yet that we should prefer cutlets from such veal, although retailed by local butchers and grocers at the low rate of 2d. per pound. From the circumstances named, an Ayrshire steer is unknown.

SUCKING VERSUS FEEDING.

We do not intend collating the pros and cons as to whether suckling from the cow, or feeding from the pail, is most desirable in the generality of cases. After a pretty full trial both ways (although our predilections were in favour of the former, as most natural and most manageable), we have been forced to the belief that the latter is the preferable course for the farmer, and for the country at large. In the first place, you can, by an ample allowance, make quite as precocious a development, if that is the object, as by allowing the calf to suck the best cow that can be met with. Then you have the satisfaction of knowing exactly what quantity of milk is consumed, when you give a stated allowance for the pail. You can also the sooner reduce the quality of the rations, by addition or substitution of other food, so as to increase the number of stock; and, in a general way, the calf learns the sooner to shift for itself. It is certainly a matter of occasional convenience to let a pair of calves run with a cow which is intended for a barren, and, after weaning, then to fatten the nurse. But, if done as a general practice, it so far retards the bullings of the cows as to defeat the annual arrangement for a certain number of calves at a particular season. Where suckling from the cow is the rule five calves may be moderately well brought up by an average cow; two and two in succession, and a single calf to finish off with. But, under any circumstances, we consider it desirable to

allow the calf to remain with its dam for the first three or four days after calving. It is undoubtedly the most natural way, and there are several advantages connected with it. Youatt expresses himself very truthfully when he says, "It is a cruel thing to separate the mother from the young so soon; the cow will pine, and will be deprived of that medicine which nature designed for her, in that moisture which hangs about the calf, and even in the placenta itself; and the calf will lose that gentle friction and motion which helps to give it the immediate use of all its limbs, and which, in the language of Mr. Berry, 'increases the languid circulation of the blood, and produces a genial warmth in the half-exhausted and chilled little animal.'" He further says, and we are glad to quote from so high an authority, "In whatever manner the calf is afterwards to be reared, it should remain with the mother for a few days after it is dropped, and until the milk can be used in the dairy. The little animal will thus derive the benefit of the first milk, that to which nature has given an aperient property, in order that the black and glutinous fæces which had been accumulating in the intestines during the later months of the foetal state might be carried off." Moreover, the cow's udder becomes more soft and pliant than it would otherwise be, by the calf being allowed to suck for a time. In the case of young cows especially—the udders of which are generally hard—it is often advisable to allow the calf to suck for a couple of weeks. The whole of the milk need not be consumed by the calf, but a portion drawn into the pail before it is allowed the teat. Thus a double purpose is served; the calf gets the richest (the last) of the milk, and the udder is softened the more by its efforts to obtain what it requires. Not much trouble is generally experienced in getting the calf to take the pail. We find it better to miss the evening's meal, and next morning a very little attention induces the majority of them to partake of what is set before them. At most, the guidance of the fingers may be wanted for the first meal or two.

(To be continued.)

Points of a Good Horse.

MR. BARTHOLOP, in a discussion on the breeding and management of horses, at a recent meeting of the Framingham farmers' club (England,) gave the following as his idea of a good "hunter":

The most valuable horses are those that can carry the most weight; and although it does not always follow that the 16-hand horse can beat one of 15 hands, yet most men like to be on a horse high enough to enable them to see what is on the other side of a fence as they come to it; I therefore think the hunter brood mare should not be less than 15½ hands. It is sometimes said, "A horse does not go on his head," and that it is not an important feature; but I think a good head is a great setting off to a horse. I would have it well proportioned to the size of the horse, and care not so much for a "pretty head" as a good intelligent looking one—no matter if it is rather long, provided it is lean, with a kindly expression of eye, nicely hung on the neck, clear between the jaws, to admit of the trachea, or windpipe, having full play, and free from all thickening of any kind; the neck should be light, yet running gradually to strong well-laid shoulders; the back should be of moderate length, with ribs springing well from the chine, a well-arched loin, two long hind quarters; the tail "on the top of his back," as it is called, is pretty enough to look at, but I believe the horse with rather drooping hind quarters will be found the fastest. The thighs should be full and muscular, running down into clean, big hocks, flat hind legs, good fetlock joints and feet. It is important that the mare has deep, as well as good springing ribs, muscular, not fleshy shoulders, good deep brisket with plenty of room for the lungs to play, arms well developed, and standing square on good flat fore legs, the sinews of which should be free from all appearance of fleshiness, but hard and wiry feeling, and running into strong fetlock and pastern joints, with feet free from all appearance of contraction or flatness. This description of the essential points of a horse is perhaps a very imperfect one, but I know not what more to say about it, further than, above all things, secure good oblique shoulders, and strong thighs and hocks. Nice, straight fore legs are doubtless very desirable, but I would rather put up with a horse with arched fore legs, and that was a little cross ankl'd, provided his shoulders and hind legs were good, than have the best formed fore legs ever seen, with upright short shoulders; remember, however, that it is not every horse with high withers that is desirable, but the shoulders should be long and well laid into the back. The chief points of excellence that I have enumerated in the mare are in all respects the same in the stallion, with perhaps the exception that his form

* Flake hurdles, or lamb hurdles, as they are variously styled.