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Fitting Dairy Cattle for the Show

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To fit dairy cattle for the fall fairs is very interesting and profitable work. It shows what an improvement can be made on the dairy cow when she gets a little extra care and attention. A few years ago when exhibitors were few, they took their cows off the pastures a few days before leaving for the fairs and showed them almost in the rough state. If one were to practise such a method in these latter days, I fear he would not secure many of the coveted ribbons.

If the dairy herd is to be shown at the fall fairs, the exhibitor should begin to fit in good time at least six weeks prior to the fair. Personally, I prefer to keep the cows in the barn during the day, to protect them from heat and flies, turning them out in the evening when it is cool. Keep the barn somewhat darkened during the day and put a light covering on the cows. Feed bags ripped open answer this purpose very well. This is better for keeping off the flies than spraying with oil or other mixtures. It does not injure the coat, and the cows wash out much nicer at fair time.

FEED FOR FITTING

If the pasturage is good the feeding will not cost much more than usual. Give a light feed of grain in the morning and again in the evening before turning out; follow with some green feed at noon. If the pasturage is poor, feed more green feed. For a grain ration I prefer a mixture such as bran, crushed oats, oil cake, and cotton seed meal. One must study each animal to get the best results from feeding, and feed the grain suited to their requirements.

The condition of the cow should determine the quantity and kind of grain to be fed. For the ordinary dairy cow, in full milk, a good ration per day would be four lbs. bran, two lbs. crushed oats, two lbs. oil cake, and two lbs. cotton seed meal. For a dry cow in fair condition, two lbs. bran, one lb. crushed oats, and two lbs. oil cake would be sufficient. No hard and fast rule can be followed in feeding, as breeds of cattle and the condition of individual animals differ greatly. Great care must be taken not to overfeed. A watchful herdsman will soon know just what each cow requires.

DETAILS IN FINISHING

A week before leaving for the fairs, the cows should be kept in the barn altogether, only allowing them a little exercise in the yard every other day. This confinement will accustom them to the treatment they are likely to receive at the fair. Feed good hay and less green feed. Teach them to drink from a bucket. This latter point is important. Cows that have always been turned out to drink are often very fussy about drinking from a bucket.

To trim cattle properly practice is necessary. Generally, it improves a dairy cow to have her head and neck closely clipped, but unless one understands what he is doing he is apt to make mistakes. A cow looks better untrimmed than

poorly trimmed. Give the cows a good wash a few days before leaving home and again the day before exhibiting.

Always have the cattle thoroughly haltered broken before leaving home. The exhibition grounds are a poor place to teach them. A cow that will step smartly round the ring, without having to be pulled and pounded, makes a good impression. There are a great many more details which might be dwelt on, but they can soon be learned from experience.

Crops Used to Supplement Pasture

Edmund Laidlaw and Sons, Elgin Co., Ont.

Where the second crop of clover is done growing, which will be about the 1st of October, we have grass, oats and rye ready for pasture. We sow the rye ready for a grain crop about the 20th of August or the 1st of September. We sow one bushel of rye and one and a half bushels of oats, which we pasture from the first or 15th of October till it is time to stable the cows. We always get a good flow of milk in October and November from this green pasture and the rye is left for a crop of grain the next year. It usually yields from 28 to 32 bushels an acre, so there is practically no loss time in sowing this mixture for fall pas-

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Farm and Dairy is our favorite farm paper. It is full of good, practical advice written by good, practical men. Every farmer in Canada should have this splendid dairy and farm paper in his home.—H. C. Clarke, Halton Co., Ont.

ture. We often get as much milk in November as we do the latter part of June.

We do not turn the cows out to grass until there is an abundant growth of second year clover and timothy. This will last till about the first of July when it begins to get old. For a change we try to have a field of green oats and rye to pasture. It is a good plan to plow the field intended for the rye the fall before and work it well till the first of June or possibly not quite so late and then sow it with one and a half bushels of oats and one and a half bushels of rye an acre. This will be ready in an ordinary season about the first week in July. We try and sow enough to last till the 25th of July or first of August, when the second growth clover is ready.

Some years, if it is dry weather, the second crop of clover does not amount to much, but we have been top-dressing our meadows for a few years back and we generally have a good second growth.

However, if the clover does fail us, we have a good supply of corn ensilage to tide them over till the ensilage comes again. We do not consider anything equal to good ensilage for summer feeding where there is shortage of pasture. It is handy to feed and is relished by the cows, and they seem to hold to a good flow of milk the whole season when fed on it.

Saving and Application of Manure

J. S. Kemp, Perth Co., Ont.

My method of handling manure has been to put a part of the horse manure into the hog-pens, the balance into the trench behind the cows to absorb and save liquids. For all distant fields I draw it out in large piles direct from the stables, ready to be spread with the spreader when wanted. In this way I save the time that it would take to draw it from the yards and barns in the hurry of seed time and also avoid the waste that takes place when left in the barn yards, in the snow and ice and under the eaves of the stables, exposed to the melting snow and rains which dissolve out and carry away a large per cent. of the fertilizing properties. When drawn direct from the stables there will be practically no washing away, the manure pile absorbing nearly all the melting snow and rain that falls on it.

When spreading manure on plowed ground, I first harrow and then roll; under this method a pair of fairly good horses will handle the spreader that is equipped with a flat-tooth cylinder. I then harrow and roll and the ground is ready for seeding. The fine manure being mixed with the surface of the soil is available to the plant when it will do the most good, which is when it first puts forth its roots in search of its food. The sooner it has a vigorous healthy growth of roots and foliage the better. All plants feed more or less from the air. The vigorous healthy plants get their full share while the poorly fed, stunted plants get very little. It is while the plants are young that they obtain the most food in this way; getting less and less as they advance towards maturity; hence the importance of the plant food being so placed that it can get it when most needed. I never plow down manure, as I am able to get better results by having it mixed with the surface soil. Often in early spring we get more rain than is needed and usually cold rains; these rise out the liquids that have been absorbed, also dissolve and carry down and away the more solvent parts of the solid manure while the plant roots are keeping near the surface to avoid the wet and cold, while what was intended for their food is being washed away.

My farming has always been for the dairy, and when I find a meadow failing I top-dress it. The number of loads to the acre depends how much is available and the quality of the manure. For example if I have two acres that need manure and have only 16 loads, I would divide it and manure the whole area. I have, with good results, put on as low as four loads to the acre. Time, anywhere from the first of August to the middle of October. I like to have the manure on the spot and if possible to spread it when the ground is comparatively dry and just before a rain. Avoid spreading when the ground is very wet, not only that the wheels will cut the meadow but if spread when the soil is wet and the rain continues it cannot absorb the fertilizing properties as they are dissolved and a large per cent. is washed away.