



FARM AND DAIRY



We Welcome Practical Progressive Ideas

& RURAL HOME

The Recognized Expound of Dairying in Canada

Trade increases the wealth and glory of a country; but its real strength and stamina are to be looked for among the cultivators of the land.—Lord Chatham.

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How We Doubled Our Herd Average*

By K. JOHNSON

Intelligent Methods Turn Annual Losses into Substantial Profits

THE farmer who takes up dairying in an intelligent and thorough way can not fail to make rapid strides toward improvement, and the betterment of his bank account. Dairying is one of the most paying branches of farming. Under fair circumstances the dairy cow will generally give \$2 worth of butter fat in return for every \$1 worth of feed given to her. You will have to admit that this is really a good investment.

But to accomplish this we must give our dairy cows the right attention. Under the way it is generally done on our farms it is not possible, and if the farmer would begin to figure up just how things stand he would find that his cows are not making him very much, and in many cases nothing at all. Let us compare two systems of dairying briefly. One of these is as it is generally carried on, where no special care is given; and the other, where special efforts are made to do things as they should be done.

A Visit To Our Herd

Now, I am going to take you home to our farm. We have a history in our dairy there which covers both sides. Years ago we did not get much satisfaction out of our cows. As it went, we took about as good care of them, we thought, as anyone else did around us. But the returns were mighty poor. Our creamery returns for the year beginning October 1, 1907, and ending October 1, 1908, indicated that we hauled to the creamery 1,276 pounds of butter fat, for which we received \$363. This was before we commenced keeping records and feeding balanced rations.

We had eleven cows, which came in fresh at different times of the year, mostly in the spring and summer. Our herd bull, always a non-descript, or, if of any type at all, more of a beef type than a dairy type, was allowed to run with the cows the year around. Our barn was good and warm, although not convenient, but no special care was given in feeding. Lowland, slough hay, and corn stalks were the principal roughage; and when we did feed any concentrates it was generally of whatever kind we happened to have, and we fed all cows alike. No attempt at any system was made or thought of. The cows were allowed to remain outdoors most of the

days in the winter time, were compelled to drink ice cold water, and we had a great time fighting lice and vermin on them in the winter time. They came out in the spring, shaggy, lean, and run down. How does this picture strike you? Isn't it the way you find it on many farms? Investigate a little and you will find that their dairy accounts look just like their cows—run down.

125 Pounds Fat a Cow

At that time our cows averaged 125 pounds of butter fat per year, worth \$33. Then I began



A Round Barn, Most Up-to-Date in its Construction

This barn, built by W. S. McDonald, Leeds Co., Ont., is fire and time proof. The concrete foundations reach down four feet to bed rock. The framework is of steel with reinforced concrete between the beams. The diameter is 90 feet, the post 47 feet. The roof is of steel-ere beams covered with 2 x 10 inch planks, and there is a 20 foot air space in the center, 20 feet six inches in diameter and 60 feet high with 12 inch walls.

to study and read a little on dairying. Did you get that—"study and read." That is the first thing one has to do. I saw that things could be done better. I saw that we could get more out of our cows. I began to wake up. I talked it over with my uncle, and said that we ought to get a scale and Babcock tester, and some bran and feed our cows better. He thought, like a good many of us have thought, that it would not pay to feed these old cows, and then the scale and tester seemed a little high-priced.

Finally we agreed to make a trial. Fortunately, several of our cows came in fresh that fall. I got the bran and began to weigh the milk from each cow, made occasional tests, and figured out carefully balanced rations according to feeding

standards. The results showed at once. Our next creamery check following was \$60, while the highest that we ever had received before was a little over \$30. There, in one month, we paid for the bran, the scale and tester, and then some. It opened my eyes like nothing else could. And that is generally the way with us farmers, when something touches the pocketbook, we believe.

Poor Cows Disposed Of

I kept on putting good things into practice as fast as I could. By means of the scale and tester I found out which cows were best, and disposed of the rest. We began to take better care of our cows. They were not allowed to stand outdoors and freeze in the winter, nor to drink ice water. We raised clover hay for them and beasts for succulent feeding in the winter. They were all bred so as to come fresh in the last part of October and the beginning of November. Three years later, from the same number of cows, many of them the same cows that we had before, with exactly the same average creamery price for the year, our returns for the year beginning October 1, 1910, and ending October 1, 1911, were \$636.46, or nearly \$60 per cow, and the total butter fat was 2,199 pounds, or just about 200 pounds per cow.

Now, this was from the same cows to a great extent, or at least from ordinary scrub cows. The only difference was that they were fed right and taken better care of. Our last year's herd record shows that out of nine cows having a full year's record the average received from each cow was 247 pounds of butter fat, worth \$87.43, the cost of keep being \$39.89 per cow, and the net returns \$47.54. This winter they have been doing still better. Our creamery cheques have averaged close to \$100 per month from an average of 11 cows. We expect some of our best cows to bring over 300 pounds of butter fat this year. Now, this is nothing extraordinary by any means; it is only a beginning; but it shows what can be done when a little care and attention is given.

Our Barn Remodelled

We have now remodelled our barn, and have it very handy, clean and convenient in every way, with plenty of light and a complete King system of ventilation. We have a good pure bred sire, and as soon as we can do so we are going to have pure bred stock entirely. Things are now arranged so that our herd improves year after year. The milk is weighed from each cow at each milking, and tests are made regularly. The cows are fed before freshening as well as

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*Price essay by K. Johnson, in content conducted by the Minnesota Dairy and Food Department.