

Breeding Milking Heifers

By "Perdman"

THERE is a very prevalent opinion among farmers that beef cattle are comparatively easy to raise, and that the beef-bred heifer is almost sure to be a good beef animal and a mother of good beef animals. These same farmers are equally certain that the raising of a heifer calf is largely a lottery, with the chances against you. Every one of these men will cite instances from their own experience or the experience of neighbors where daughters of excellent milkers were themselves of no account at the pail. I will grant that there is some truth in their contention. A beef animal carries all we want to know about her right on the outside, where everything we desire of her is right in plain sight. Milk production, however, is a matter of temperament and breeding tendencies and is not so easily controlled. To me, this is half the charm of dairy cattle breeding; it calls for more skill and good judgment than is demanded of the beef breeder.

I am speaking only of breeding high-class pure-bred dairy cattle. In a grade dairy herd or a herd of moderately good pure-breds, the breeding of heifers that will do well at the pail is a more certain operation than the breeding of a good beef animal. The cardinal mistake made by those who consider dairy cattle breeding a lottery is that they place their reliance for milking qualities on the dam. All scientific investigations and practical observations go to prove that the milk making tendency is inherited most largely from the sire. All our breed records offer abundant proof of this. Study the pedigrees of high record animals. In all cases they trace back through a line of high producers on the sire's side, while on the dam's side, in many cases, the breeding is mediocre.

Milk Transmitted Through Sons

Stating the same breeding law another way we may say that a heavy milking cow transmits her qualities through her male rather than her female offspring. Here is an instance that has come under my observation. A big roan Shorthorn cow in a friend's herd was an excellent milker. Her heifer calves were failures as milkers. A couple of her male calves had been sold to neighbors. Practically every heifer sired by these two bulls turned out to be excellent milkers, possessing the excellent productive powers of their grand-dam.

It is just at this point that I expect the cow testing work conducted from Ottawa to fail of maximum results in many cases. I know of men who are trying to improve their herds by keeping heifer calves from the best cows without much regard to the milking propensities of the sire. Such breeding may result in a deterioration

rather than an increase in the average of herd production. I am not finding fault with the cow testing movement; it is good, and I have personally heard Mr. Whitley urge that milk weighing and testing should be only supplementary to good breeding.

I do not wish to be misunderstood; the sire is of most importance, but the dam also has influence. Best and quickest results are obtained by breeding the best cows in the herd to the best dairy sire obtainable. Cow testing and the pure-bred sire going hand in hand, dairy breeding is not a lottery. It is reasonable certainty.

The Length of the Test

By J. R. Donaldson

THE commercial dairyman must have his cows freshen at or near each 12-month in-

cattle. The commercial dairyman, who makes his records in 12 months between calvings, is asked to compute the superior value of pure-bred cattle on records made in 12 months of actual milk production and 15 months between freshening. This has not seemed reasonable to some. Others are equally ready to defend the present system. Breeders themselves vary in their opinion, and recently when in the Belleville district of Ontario, I asked several of our leading breeders for their replies. Here are a few of the opinions received:

"The length of the test should be reduced to 10 months. The cow needs a rest, and if she does not get it she cannot be bred so frequently."—R. Honey.

"I am not in favor of changing the length of test. Canadians are even now at a disadvantage as compared with United States breeders in making records."—Wm. Stewart.

"I am not in favor of changing the length of test. Some large records have already been made under the old regulations, and 10-month records would look small compared with them."—Alex. Hume.

"A change to a 10-month lactation period should meet with favor."—Eagleson.

"I believe that the length of the test should be reduced. Canadian breeders are not on the same basis with United States breeders anyway, and a 10-months' test would be a more normal one."—P. B. Nelson.

"I believe it might be advisable to reduce the test period to 10 months."—Richardson.

"It will be a long time before the 10-months' standard is adopted. There have been too many records made at 12 months."—H. K. Denyes.

"I believe the 10-months' test to be preferable because it better resembles normal conditions than one of 12 months' duration."—A. D. Foster.

"I am wholly in favor of a 10-months' test; 12 months is too long to keep a cow working at full capacity, especially when she is carrying a calf."—D. B. Tracey.

Here are the opinions of several breeders of both Ayrshire and Holstein cattle. Evidently it will be some time yet before breeders will agree on either one practice or the other as being most desirable.

Dragging the corn crosswise of the rows is good practice both before it appears and a few days afterwards. Then start the cultivator.



One of the Choicest Cows Ever Shown at the Ormstown Spring Fair.

Rhoda's Princess, female grand champion of the Holstein breed at the recent Ormstown Spring Fair, was pronounced by many to be the best milk cow exhibited at any of the six fairs held there. Note her true dairy conformation and splendidly balanced udder. She is owned by Neil Sangster, Ormstown, Que. Photo by an editor of Farm and Dairy.



A Fine Tribute to the Skill and Good Judgment of Her Breeder.

Loch Fergus Cherry, along with more size than is characteristic of her breed, possesses the straight lined type demanded by the Ayrshire fancier. She was first in the milk cow class and female champion at Ormstown. Owned by Hector Gordon, Riverfield, Que.

Photo by an editor of Farm and Dairy.

terval. The breeder of pure-bred cattle, running his cows in Record of Performance test, aims to have them freshen as near to 15 months as possible in order that the cow may have every chance to make a creditable 12 months' production. The ostensible object of semi-official tests is to increase the commercial value of dairy



A Choice Line of Jerseys. The Graded Herd Exhibited at the Ormstown Spring Fair, by B. H. Bull & Son, Brampton, Ont.

Photo by an editor of Farm and Dairy.