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FARMS AND FARMING

Practical Advice on Reconstructing the Dairy Herd. (3)

[This is the third of this series. Look up the back numbers for those already published.—ED.]

In reply to Oxford County Farmer I would like to ask him one question. Would extra feed and care increase the annual average milk production of his cows to 6,000 pounds, of say 3.5 per cent. milk? If so he has a foundation on which to put a pure bred sire of some of the recognised dairy breeds, provided, of course, his cows are of good dairy type. I have known of many good grade herds being built up by the use of pure bred sires, and their production doubled in one generation. If their production cannot be materially increased by extra care and feed, and if they are off type, then get the bunch ready for the butcher, as beef is selling at a good price, and select a few good high-grade Ayrshire or Holstein cows (if milk is wanted) and breed to a sire of the breed you have chosen—if high-grade Ayrshires then use an Ayrshire bull and if high-grade Holsteins use a Holstein bull. Be sure and select the sire from a family that has creditable milk records behind them. Let record and breed type be your first consideration in the purchase of a sire. Too often this is forgotten and price alone is looked at. A sire from a family that has a number of 10,000 to 12,000 pound records with a high per cent. of butterfat is worth a great deal more than a sire backed up with records of 6,000 to 8,000 lbs. I have suggested that Oxford County Farmer market his low producing cows and replace them with superior producers, as usually each spring there are a number of good cows for sale. These may cost him more than he receives for his low-producing cows, which go to the butcher, but if his selection is right, the increase in production the first year will more than repay him and he will have superior foundation stock to mate with his pure bred sire.

It does not pay to feed the low producing cow, and herein is where many dairymen fall down in not discriminating and culling. To breed only the best, feed only the best and weed out the unprofitable cows is the only way to put the dairy business on each farm on a sure and profitable basis. Why is it that some of our dairy farmers succeed and others apparently never get anywhere? The question is easily solved. The dairy man who succeeds usually keeps no boarder cows, while the other fellow that is not successful is content to feed and labour among his herd of "boarders" and wonders why he can't pay off the mortgage without so much hard labour. This latter class don't think. If they would only stop and consider as Oxford County Farmer has done, they would soon put their "boarders" to the block, and replace them with cows that would yield a profit each year.

We trust Oxford County Farmer may be successful in changing from an unprofitable to a profitable dairy herd. Ayrshires will help him to do it if he gives them a chance. It might be to his advantage to purchase a registered heifer or two and begin to breed pure bred stock.—W. F. STEPHEN, Secretary Canadian Ayrshire Breeders' Association.

Value of Wood Ashes.

Have you ever stopped to think of the value of wood ashes as a fertilizer? As it is the direct product of plant tissue it must contain the mineral elements of plant food. Potash is the most important one found in wood ashes and phosphoric acid is also found. Owing to the scarcity of potash during the war and its high price it has been calculated that average well-kept wood ashes were worth \$1 to \$1.50 per cwt.

It does not become immediately available, but the effects are noticeable for several years. It should be applied in early spring at the rate of 600 to 1,500 pounds per acre. If to be used for potatoes only apply on soil where scab is known not to exist as it has the effect of creating favourable conditions for the growth of the potato scab spores.

It is very important that ashes should be kept dry as they leach very easily and a large proportion of their value is lost.—A.E.H.

Burbank Steps Forward with a Super Wheat.

A wheat that may be grown from Labrador to Patagonia, yielding 49.88 bushels per acre, is worthy of notice. According to the "Popular Science Monthly," this is another product of Luther Burbank's wonderful experimental labours.

The new wheat, which is a winter variety, is an exceedingly early grain—the earliest of some four or five hundred varieties which Burbank has been growing. He has tested it by comparison with 68 of the best wheats of the world, and finds it superior in yield, uniformity and all other desirable characteristics. It grows to a height of four feet on ordinary soil and thrives in almost any but the most extreme climates.

The new wheat resembles the Marquis but has very large white flinty kernels, in which the percentage of gluten is very high. Hence, as baking tests have also proved, it is a very good bread wheat, producing loaves of good colour, texture and taste.—C.A.G.

Silo Facts for the Live Stock Farm.

The silo preserves the palatability and succulence of the green corn plant for winter feeding.

It helps to make use of the entire corn plant.

The silo increases the live stock capacity of the farm.

Silage is a good summer feed when pastures are short.

Because of the small amount of ground space required by the silo, it is an economical means of storing forage.

The silo prevents waste of corn stalks, leaves and husks which contain about two-fifths of the feeding value of the corn plant.

The silo located near the feed manger is an assurance of having feed near at hand in stormy as well as fair weather.

—"The Maritime Farmer."

According to a "Daily Record" cablegram dated February 5th, Mr. J. H. Evans, Deputy Minister of Agriculture for Manitoba, says that the conditions were never better in his province for a bumper crop. Large areas of new arable land are also being prepared for spring sowing.