

Holstein and Ayrshire Characteristics Compared

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Since I have started to breed Ayrshires as well as Holsteins numerous have been the enquiries that I have received from farmers who are thinking of investing in one of these dairy breeds and who ask for my views of the merits and demerits of the two breeds. Though perfectly willing to give any information that I can to help a beginner, it would be a physical impossibility to answer my correspondents individually, so from time to time I will try to give the information in a wholesale way through the columns of The Canadian Dairyman and Farming World.

In the first place, I like to take plenty of time to find things out from my own experience. As

good digestive organs, but because she has also the power, in a large degree, to draw upon her own system, and to put the energy and strength that she has acquired whilst dry into producing her milk. The milk she gives is obtained from this stored up energy quite as much as from the feed she eats at the time she is giving milk. Hence, we find, no matter how well we may feed her when milking she loses flesh and weight. This explains why those who understand her, and who manage her right by getting her in good condition before calving, get such great results from her. It is also, the reason why others do not get such good results. They do not consider her nature and do not get her into good condition while she is dry. The milk produced under proper conditions is produced cheaply, especially if we consider only the feed given her at the time she

she is milking, as the feed she has had whilst dry is aiding her in the production. There comes a time, of course, when she has drawn upon that stored up energy until there is no more to draw upon. Then she gradually shrinks in her milk and gives a more moderate quantity, the amount of which depends largely upon the care and feed she gets at that time.

CHARACTERISTICS

An Ayrshire cow, though enabled to draw upon her reserve strength (as all good cows must do), does not seem to

have that peculiar power in nearly as great an extent. And on this account she does not reach as great a production during the early months of the milk period, in proportion to her year's work. But, she keeps pegging away with the result that we find Ayrshire cows, five or six months after freshening, giving nearly as much milk as they have, say two months after freshening, but this is only where they have been getting the best of care and feed during the whole period.

CARE AND FEED NECESSARY

No cow, be she Holstein or Ayrshire, is going to

for human beings is a big tax upon her and it is up to us to do our best for her.

As it is important that the characteristic of the two breeds shall be understood perhaps I can make it more clear by giving a few figures from the different periods of lactation of a cow of each breed that I consider equally representative of each breed.

A Holstein gave 593.6 pounds milk, 19.83 pounds fat in seven days.

An Ayrshire gave 386.4 pounds milk, 15.84 pounds fat in seven days.

Both of these cows were fresh in November and had practically the same feed at that time. The Ayrshire cow is a good feeder, able to handle 18 pounds meal, 40 pounds mangels, 30 pounds ensilage and some hay daily and never miss a meal. The Holstein cow lost more in flesh and that was why she produced, at this time, more cheaply. She could produce more because it was her nature to draw upon her reserve to a greater extent than was the case with the Ayrshire. That it paid to feed her well at that time is shown by their work in June. Seven months after calving the Ayrshire on grass gave 88 pounds milk daily, at the same time the Holstein gave 48 pounds milk daily. If we take their test the same, as when fresh it would be 1,584 pounds butter fat for the Ayrshire and 1,632 pounds butter fat for the Holstein daily. This is not nearly as great a difference as at the beginning of the milk period.

It must not be inferred from this that the Holstein is a less persistent milker for the year. The Holstein strikes a tremendous gait at the start by being able to draw upon her own system. But, when all the reserve is gone, she has to be content with a more moderate pace. The cost of production is nearly always in favor of the largest producer, especially during the producing period. But, at the end of the milk period, in this case, the Ayrshire cow carries the most flesh, she has not exhausted her system to as great an extent and the Holstein cow will require more meal whilst dry if we are to have her in fettle to do as good work next year.

It is not an easy matter to dry up a good Holstein. Instead of half starving her we would rather trust to irregular milking. Milk once a day for two weeks, then keep lengthening the periods. Give her plenty of salt. Keep her bowels loose to ward off garget. Remember, always, and if we would have her repeat next year we must take the means of putting her in shape for another year's work. It is by attention to these little points that many farmers get such fine results. The man who knows how and will do it (that is as regards taking care of a Holstein right) can obtain great results. Because she is such a large producer and because she produces her milk in the way she does, she needs rather more skill and different management than her Ayrshire sister when dry.

The Ayrshire cow when dry needs but comparatively little care. She is carrying as much flesh as is necessary and as much as she can make good use of. All the year through she presents a nice picture to the eye. Her udder, being more flesh, helps her to present a good appearance.

When good milking Ayrshires form the herd, very satisfactory results can be obtained. The results depend quite as much upon the man and his management and selection as they do upon the cows. Unless the herd is very large it is best to be content with one breed. If good results are not obtained, it may be the fault of the man rather than of the breed.

No breed can retain its superiority unless well cared for and well fed. This is most important with dairy cattle, as the production of milk puts an enormous tax upon them. We must keep up the vitality and thrift and avoid crossing. Crossing is nothing more than a mixing of pure breeds. As each breed has its distinct characteristics our aim should be to make the most of these.



JEAN ARMOUR

An Ayrshire cow of the milking type—the kind that dairymen like to own.

yet I have not had time enough to do this with these two breeds.

Our improved breeds of dairy cattle have been developed by improved methods of care, mating and feeding. Not all registered cattle, by any means, have had this necessary attention. Hence many of these have deteriorated and although they may be registered and be pure bred, they cannot be considered to be improved cattle. There is a vast difference between the individual animals of every breed. In order that the character of the different breeds may be studied it is necessary to have many animals of each breed to compare from, and to compare only those of each breed that are equally representative of that breed.

In comparing Holstein and Ayrshire, another difficulty presents itself. Although utility is our standard and we value a cow for the amount of milk, cheese or butter that can be made from her milk, the two breeds have a decided and distinct way of doing business. A good Holstein cow produces enormously. She is able to do this when handled to the best advantage, from the fact that she is not only a good feeder and has



MERCEDES CANARY PIETERSE

A Holstein cow, in good flesh at calving. Later on she turns all her energy into milk

do her best unless she gets the best care and feed. The production of large quantities of food