

The Dead Meat Trade and How It Will Benefit the Stockman*

(Continued from last issue.)

I have already stated that

THE LOCAL TRADE

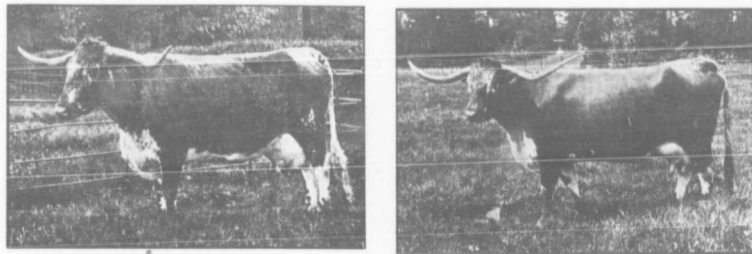
in Canada was not large as compared with that of other countries, and yet it is large enough to merit some consideration from both the producer and shipper. As our country grows and becomes more thickly populated the consumption of meat will increase. Even now it is increasing at a rapid rate. Ontario is fast becoming the manufacturing centre for the whole Dominion. Her factories and manufacturing concerns are increasing in number. This means more employment for men in our towns and cities, and increased consumption of meat products. The local trade of this province, therefore, is worthy of some attention. We are safe in estimating that at least two-thirds of the cattle marketed every year in Ontario are consumed at home. The percentage may be higher than this, it will not be any lower. The cattle reach the consumer largely through the local butcher or dealer, who kills in

dress a carcass ready for market as it does at a large abattoir, and this extra cost comes out of the cattle raiser. It has been this concentration of effort that has made the dead meat trade in the United States so profitable to both the cattle raiser and packer. To such an extent is this the case that cattle values to the south of the line are considerably higher for the same quality than in Canada.

In advocating a central dressed meat industry for supplying the local trade in our towns and cities it may be said that we are running counter to the butchers and dealers in these places. But not so. A radical change has come about recently on this score. A large packing and abattoir concern in Toronto has within the past year or two established retail stores in a number of the towns and cities of the province for the purpose of reaching the consumer in these places with their supply of dressed meat. This has opened the eyes of the local butcher, who has

our country is free from any contagious cattle disease. But we have a boundary line across the continent that leaves us exposed to contagion from the South. Should by any chance foot and mouth, or any other contagious disease get to the north of the boundary, as it came nearly doing a year or two ago, and the fact became public property, immediately British ports would be shut against us, and instead of our cattle being allowed ten days to live on Britain's shores, they would not be allowed to land at all. Should such a condition arise it would prove a national calamity. Cattle values would fall away below the profit line, and the breeder of pure bred stock would have to go out of business. It is to be hoped that such a contingency will not arise, but we should be prepared for it should it come, and the way to do so is to provide facilities for slaughtering cattle at home and exporting the carcasses in a chilled state to the home land.

The establishment of the dead meat trade on a scale that would be of the greatest advantage to the country is a small undertaking. Large capital and good executive ability are required to make it a success. But this country has taken hold of other industries of no less magnitude, and



A pair of Longhorn Cattle from the herd of W. S. Shales, Atherstone, Warwickshire, England. Upon this breed of cattle the celebrated Bakewell did his best work in the eighteenth century. Photo by Parsons.

a small way, supplying the trade as it will take it. This plan means great waste in the utilization of the by-products, and thousands of dollars are lost every year on the animals supplying the local trade, because of this great waste.

THE PRICE OF MEAT

to the consumer in our larger towns and cities is about as high as he will pay or can afford to pay. With sirloin and the other choice cuts selling, for example, in Toronto at fifteen to eighteen cents a pound, you will readily understand that the consumer will cut down his meat diet if he has to pay much higher prices. This being so, there are only one or two ways of increasing the profit of the finished animal to the producer. He can reduce the cost of production by feeding cheaper foods, etc. Then the value of the live animal can be increased by a proper utilization of the by-products. But this cannot be done by killing in small quantities at local points. The killing must be conducted at centres where the slaughtering can be done on a sufficiently large scale to permit of every part of the by-product being utilized to the best advantage. Besides it costs the local butcher about three times as much per head to kill and

found that he cannot successfully compete with this firm unless he can get his supply of meat from some common centre, and the reason is that the large concern by making the most out of the by-products is able to undersell the local butcher, who kills in a small way. The demand from butchers for meat dressed and in shape to hang in their shops is growing, and there should be some large centre from which they could be supplied.

ENHANCE VALUES FOR CATTLE

Thus, from both an export and local point of view it is expedient that the dead meat trade should be established on a large and permanent scale in this country. As we have shown, it will, generally speaking, mean enhanced values for cattle, and thus prove of great advantage to the stock raiser. And what benefits the cattle raiser, will benefit the breeder of pure-bred cattle. The dead meat trade will not do everything for the producer. He must first get the right type of animal for feeding, and this can only be done by careful breeding and selecting. With a good animal well fed, the dead meat trade will place the feeder in a position to secure a better market for his cattle.

SHOULD CATTLE DISEASE BREAK OUT

There is one phase of our cattle trade that should not be overlooked in discussing this question. To-day

made a success of them, such as the bacon trade, the cheese trade, etc., and what has been done in the one case can be accomplished in the other providing the same energy and skill are put into the business. As soon as large pork-packing houses were established our people began to produce the bacon hog. In the districts where cheese factories were established and a market created for milk, farmers began to produce milk. So with the dead meat trade. Establish it on a large scale, and create a steady demand and a profitable market for beef, and our farmers will produce it in large quantities and of the quality desired.

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Dentition of Cattle

For purpose of arranging a satisfactory basis of comparison the following schedule was adopted for use at the International last year:

Twelve months.—An animal of this age shall have all of its milk (calf) incisor teeth in place.

Fifteen months.—At this age the centre pair of incisor milk teeth may be replaced by centre pair of permanent incisors (pinchers), the latter teeth being through the gums but not yet in wear.

Eighteen months.—The middle pair of permanent incisors at this age should be fully up and in wear, but next pair (first intermediate) not yet cut through gums.

*Address by the Editor of THE FARMING WORLD at the Provincial Winter Fair, Guelph, December, 1904.