

Methods and Returns from a Large Herd.

FIRST-PRIZE ACCOUNT OF "A YEAR WITH A DAIRY HERD."

Editor "The Farmer's Advocate":

As dairying is my principal branch of farming, I am anxious to learn all I can in that line. The prizes you offer should bring out some information. Quite frequently we hear of large yields from herds, but seldom ever what the cost has been to produce the yield. In the competition for your prizes, that will be brought out, which will be of great interest to your readers. It is not what the cows produce, but, Do they pay, or do they not? Previous to four years ago, I kept from 25 to 30 cows, and 30 brood sows, and sold from \$1,200 to \$1,500 worth of milk, and from \$2,000 to \$3,000 worth of pork. I could tell just what I fed my hogs, and what I received for them. As I was losing money the last year with hogs, and a powdered-milk factory opened up in Brownsville, with prospects of better prices for milk, I dropped the hogs and increased my herd of cows to 70. Since then dairying has been my hobby, but I must confess I have a hankering after the plump little pigs, with their tails curled up over their backs, and especially with pork at \$8.25 per cwt. But, while I am sending my milk to the Canadian Milk Product Co., and get nothing back but the cash, pigs are out of the question. As my revenue depends entirely on the cows, I am seeking all the information I can find, and am willing to give what little experience I have had in return. As I said, four years ago I increased my herd to 70 cows. That year they produced 360,431 pounds milk, an average of 5,149 pounds; the next year, 411,027 pounds, an average of 5,871 pounds. The next year I reduced my herd to 65 cows, which produced 403,714 pounds, an average of 6,211 pounds. Last year (1909) I again had 70 cows, including seven two-year-old heifers, which gave 469,654 pounds, an average of 6,708 pounds per cow. Considering the size of herd and very dry weather, this is not so bad for common grade cows, with perhaps more Shorthorn blood than any other kind. There is an increase in four years of 1,664 pounds per cow; 20 of the herd averaged 8,724 pounds. The most of the improvement in the herd has been accomplished by keeping records of each cow, weighing three times a month, and culling out. If I am spared for four more years, and continue in the business, I hope to have a herd of 70 cows that will average 8,000 pounds.

Now, as to feed, I have not much to say, only build silos and grow corn. In the year 1907 my cows had \$604.31 worth of oat chop, bran and shorts; 1908, \$627.64 worth oat chop, bran and shorts; 1909, \$819.93 worth oil cake, oat chop, and bran. This year I valued the chop at \$1.25 per cwt.; previous years, \$1.00. Bran was \$2.00 per ton higher. In September and October I fed \$134 worth of bran with silage, on account of drouth. These conditions would have made their feed about equal to previous years. I had no roots this year, but had in previous years. I attribute the increased yield to better cows and more regular and careful feeding.

As to care of herd during 1909, I try to have my cows freshening during March and April. Have been very successful in that; had only one farrow cow last year. My experience is that cows freshening then, and well fed until grass grows, will give more milk than if they freshen any other time in the year. I keep two pure-bred Holstein bulls, two or three years old; let one out every alternate night after the first of June. Have started raising heifer calves from my best cows, to improve and keep up my herd. Raised 13 last year, and fed them two quarts of milk twice a day for a month, then one quart twice a day, with oil cake, for six weeks, making a total of milk fed to calves of 6,225 pounds.

As to feed for cows, bought ten tons oil cake last spring, at \$32 per ton; fed about 7 tons with oat chop on ensilage up until 24th of May; then, on July 15th, commenced feeding silage twice a day, with 2 pounds oil cake per feed. First of August I commenced feeding three times a day, and have continued feeding silage three times a day until the present time. My oil cake ran out the first of September (horses and calves had about a ton); since then I have fed bran. My method of feeding in the stable last fall has been: Silage and bran, five o'clock in the morning; a little salt after milking every morning; clover hay at eight o'clock; small feed of ensilage and bran at 11:30; cows let out after dinner for an hour; ensilage and bran at 4; oat straw at 8 o'clock.

I think my cows have done very well with this routine of feed. Will give cash received for June and following months: June, \$650; July, \$656; August, \$601; July and August, oil cake with ensilage; September, \$610; October, \$662; November, \$549; December, \$444; a little wheat bran with silage the last four months. My corn this last year was good, well cared, and ripe enough for good silage. Have two silos: one tub, 20 feet, by 42 feet high; one cement, 16 feet by 40 feet. Had 50 acres corn; filled them

both; refilled the big one. Everyone who comes in my stables says my cows look well.

I want good milkers; each one milks his own cows. A poor milker will soon spoil the best cow. I found another advantage in weighing milk: A new hand started milking; when we weighed the milk, in looking over the weights, I saw that four of his cows were down in their milk. I went to try them, but they would not give it to me. I knew there was milk there. I fed them a little chop, then got 18 pounds of milk. He never milked those cows again. I give two months' rest; rather give them more than less. When dry, get nothing but hay and straw until they begin to spring, then feed a little oat chop. They are closely watched after the first of March. Try to keep every cow at her best, as one sick cow soon pulls down the average. One man does all the feeding and care of the cows, yearlings and calves, except cleaning the stables; they are cleaned with the sleigh or wagon, and manure is drawn to the field. There are water-bowls in the stable.

As to cost of maintenance of herd, three years ago I started to raise calves for this purpose; think 10 or 12 each year will do it. I feed the calves well the first winter: clover hay, turnips and chop twice a day; grow a few turnips just for calves.

As to cost of milking and running the farm, value of hay and pasture, 50 acres corn in silo, value of manure, interest on capital invested, will just give a short summary of receipts and expenditures, and let you and your readers (if you see fit to publish this) place your own values and draw your own conclusions. Will first give expenditures:

EXPENDITURE.	
300 acres, value \$30,000 stock and implements, \$6,000; \$36,000, at 5%	\$1,800.00
Hired help	1,530.61
10 tons oil cake, at \$32 per ton	322.50
Bran	285.99
20 bush. clover seed, at \$6.50; 6 bush. timothy, at \$3.25	149.50
Taxes, \$120.08; threshing, \$72	192.08
60 cords wood for men	120.00
500 pounds twine, at 10c.; \$50; 15½ bush. seed corn, \$19.37	69.37
Total expenditure	\$4,470.05

As I have good wheat land, I always prepare 25 or 30 acres of sod for wheat. Am pretty sure of 800 to 1,000 bushels every year; I need the straw for bedding.

RECEIPTS.	
Cash for milk	\$5,401.74
878 bush. wheat, at \$1.02	895.56
Sold \$132 worth of oats and barley	132.00
57 calf skins	57.00
Total receipts	\$6,486.30
Expenditure	4,470.05
Balance for my labor and incidentals	\$2,016.25

I might say the condensory was closed March, April, and most of May, for enlarging their plant. I sent milk to cheese factory. If I had received condensory prices for those months, I would have got \$250.04, which would have made an average of \$80.73 per cow, and given me a balance of \$2,216.29. I got \$163 extra for my milk, being above the standard test. Some may think the bill for help a little high. My help are all married men, and board themselves. I furnish house, wood and garden for them. Silo-filling is a little expensive. Have my own engine and box.

In conclusion, would say I have a good herdsman, and some of my cows that respond to their feed will not go hungry this year, and I will have the satisfaction of knowing what he can make common grades do. Have tried alfalfa two years; lost it the first winter each time; will try 20 acres again this spring, with Canadian-grown seed, Oxford Co., Ont. S. A. FREEMAN.

POULTRY.

A Case of Chicken Fever and its Outcome.

(By Winner of Second Prize in the "Peerless Poultry for Profit" Contest, 1909.)

It was in the fall of 1907 that I caught the chicken fever—or, rather, it caught me. I had it in such a virulent form that in a few days I had the back portion of my city lot smothered with chickens of all ages and colors.

What I intended to do, I did not as yet stop to consider, being content to sit around and watch these marvellous beauties disport themselves at my expense.

But the inevitable change was not long in coming, for, on picking up the local paper, I saw where the Poultry Association were going to have a show. The fever took an acute turn, and

when the show opened I was splendidly represented by a trio of Golden Wyandottes, of wonderful proportions, for which I had grudgingly parted with \$3.50.

Imagine my joy when I won 1st cock, 1st and 2nd hen (I was the only exhibitor of Golden Wyandottes, and with what feelings of contempt and scorn I viewed the other glorious specimens in my yard on my return. Right merrily sang the axe for a while, and when I got through I had nothing left but my Madison Square winners.

With the money obtained from the local butcher for my slaughtered pets, I bought a pen of Buff Wyandottes from a noted breeder, and then only did I begin to realize the pleasure to be derived from owning pure-bred birds. It was now the Golden's turn to go, and go they did, for I saw they were as far from being a "Dotte" as any of my mongrels; but they had fair color, and that let them out.

The land at my disposal consisted of my own lot, 40 x 125, but about one-half acre adjoining was vacant, and, being covered with small shrubs, made an admirable summer home. For buildings, I had everything from a grocery box to a lean-to, of various forms and sizes, for I had not yet got the knowledge into my fevered head that "a good bird poorly housed is a poor bird after all."

During that summer I purchased a breeding trio of Buff Rocks which the breeders had used themselves, and from which eggs had been sold for \$8 a setting, as I had by this time determined upon the breed and color I wanted; and having learned from the pile of poultry magazines, which by this time were pouring into my home, that this was the best way to start, I went in as deep as my means would allow.

Moving that fall into a new home on the edge of the city, where I had acres of good vacant land adjoining, I determined to start properly, using the knowledge gleaned from articles in the poultry press, which I had been greedily devouring for about a year.

I built a house 12 x 24, after the curtain-front style used on the Maine Station Farm, and with my Buff Rocks and Wyandottes started the new year.

I gave the trio of Rocks 8 x 12 feet, and the Wyandottes (17 in number) 16 x 12; and as eggs were selling for 75 cents at the door, and my birds laying like the 200-eggers I had been reading about, I began, on January 1st, to keep account of receipts and expenditures, a copy of which, to September 1st, I enclose.

On February 11th I started my incubator, with 120 eggs, and on March 3rd was pleased and surprised to get 98 strong, husky chicks. These were put right outside in the brooder on the morning of the 5th, and on the 29th were put into cold brooders, to make room for the next hatch, which totalled 105 chicks from 120 eggs. It was very cold here at this time, but these chicks paid no attention to that; they just hustled for their feed, and grew like weeds.

Here are my incubator operations for the season, and I think them extremely good, as there were 110 eggs from the yards of well-known breeders included, some of which had been on the road for four days: Eggs set, 350; fertile, 298; hatches, 282; alive June 1st, 278.

I followed instructions as sent out by the incubator manufacturer pretty well, but, as any machine must have fertile eggs to turn out chicks, this is where I studied the most.

I used a dry mash, fed in hoppers, consisting of equal parts of bran, shorts, corn meal, ground oats, gluten meal and beef scraps, which was open before them all the time. Fed a pint of wheat in deep litter in the morning; either sprouted oats or cabbage or green bone at noon, and a pint of barley at night. Shell, grit, charcoal, dry ground bone, and clean water, were before them always. The water was replenished two or three times a day during cold weather, and always emptied out at night.

The only tonic I used (and that only about three times all spring) was Douglas' Mixture, which is made as follows: ½ ounce sulphuric acid, 8 ounces sulphate of iron. Dissolve iron in one gallon water, and then add acid. Dose: 1 tablespoon to a pint of drinking water.

In brooding chicks, I did not give anything for 72 hours but pure water, with chill off, and for first ten days they got nothing but granulated oats, chick grit, fine charcoal, and once a day a small sprinkling of chick feed in litter about four inches thick. When ten days old, oats was discontinued, and cracked wheat, sprouted oats and dry mash was fed, same as used for fowl, but only one part of beef scrap, as from tenth day they got all the skim milk they wanted, and mash kept before them all the time from now on.

I consider skim milk and sprouted oats the finest things on earth for growing chicks, and I don't think you can overfeed on either.

In conclusion, permit me to suggest, for the benefit of the novice, the things which, from my experience, I found most essential to success, and that spell profit:

1. Good vigorous, pure-bred stock.
2. Fresh air—always.
3. Absolute cleanliness.