

Some Notes on Steer Feeding

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In a previous article, the question of selected steers for feeding was discussed in a general way. In the present one, a few suggestions relative to feeding steers will be offered.

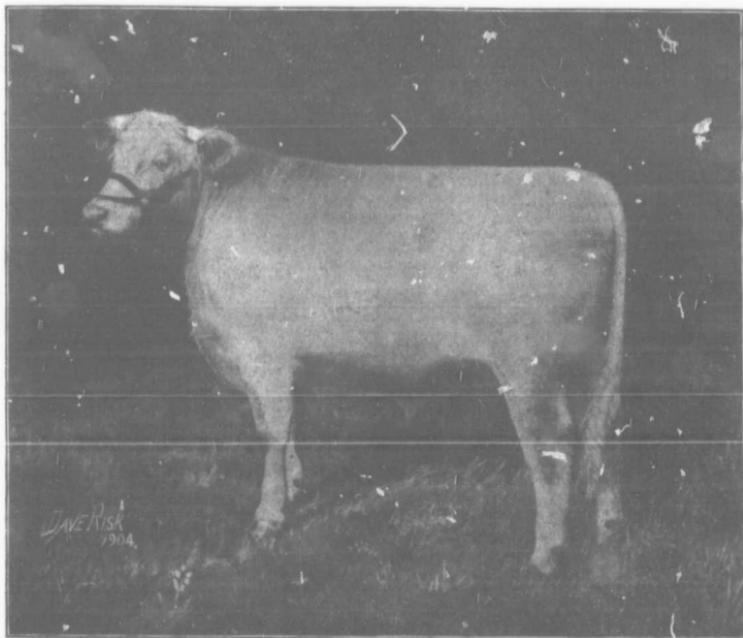
Those who read the last article would probably be impressed with the fact that a very small error in judgment in purchasing would cause a loss, in place of a profit, to the feeder. If this is true in regard to selection, it is even more so in connection with feeding. Errors in judgment in feeding cattle are extremely common, and result in a large financial loss to farmers every year. It is true that the most skillful feeder is liable to make mistakes occa-

breeding, such steers will often give a good account of themselves. If the farmer has a field of rape into which to turn them, especially if there is a pasture field adjacent to it, these thin steers will make good gains on rape during September and October, and come into the stable in the best possible condition for winter feeding. The main objection to this plan is the fact that feeding steers are often higher in price during August and September than they are later in the season. When they can be bought worth the money, however, the plan is a good one, for rape is not only a good food for steers, but it will also take the place of a

thoroughly, and hence a serious waste is incurred. The probability is, also, that it will interfere with their subsequent gains, and that the feeder will be disappointed in the gains made by his cattle when he sells them in the spring.

FEEDING THE MEAL

Long-keep steers are all the better to receive practically no meal during the first month they are in the stable, or, at most, merely a sprinkling of meal on their other food, say, between one and two pounds per day. Thus they become accustomed to meal, and the quantity may be gradually increased until, by the end of the second month, they may reach as high as four pounds each per day. An increase in the amount of meal should be made gradually, and the extent to which it should be increased after



The yearling Shorthorn steer [Fruit Creek Wanderer, 1st in his class at the Chicago International, 1901. Property of W. D. Flatt, Hamilton, Ont.

sionally, for no man is infallible in matters pertaining to stock feeding. At the same time, there are certain general principles in connection with feeding steers with which it is well to be familiar, and from which it is not safe to depart. When the margin is so small as it is at present, we must aim to get every available ounce of nutriment out of the foods we use, if we wish to see a profit upon our operations. Economy must be our watchword, and economical feeding means getting the largest gain in weight from a given amount of food.

LONG-KEEP STEERS

By long-keep steers is meant steers which, on account of light weight or thin condition, have to be fed five or six months before they are ready for market. If they are young and of good

summer fallow, so far as cleaning the land of weeds is concerned.

When the steers are taken into the stable, the greatest care is necessary to prevent bad effects from the change. Hard and fast rules cannot be laid down in connection with feeding animals of any kind, but the feeder must remember that these animals, fresh from the pasture, are used to bulky, succulent food, and he must make an effort to give them a ration approaching as closely as possible to the one to which they are accustomed. Some feeders, anxious for large gains in weight, commence feeding a heavy meal ration as soon as the steers are stabled. By doing so they are simply throwing away a large part of the meal they are feeding, for the steers, not being accustomed to concentrated foods, do not digest the meal

the point just mentioned, will depend upon the condition of the steers. As a rule, reasonably good long-keep steers can be finished for market by feeding, on an average, about half a pound of meal per day for every 100 pounds of their live weight. That is to say, if the average live weight of a steer for the whole feeding period is 1,200 pounds, the amount of meal required to fatten him will average about 6 pounds per day. Of course, towards the close of the feeding period, it may be necessary to increase the meal ration to nearly a pound per day per 100 pounds of live weight, but since the ration was extremely small at the beginning, and was very gradually increased, the average daily ration will not exceed, to any considerable extent, the quantity stated. The feeder must ever bear in mind