



# MIXED FARMING

MANITOBA - SASKATCHEWAN - ALBERTA

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## Selection of Kinds and Breeds of Live Stock

THE idea is often expressed that the most important thing in choosing a breed of live stock is to pick out one that you like, and that the greater interest and enthusiasm engendered by working with the breed you like will more than overcome any obstacles. There is doubtless a certain amount of truth in this, and within certain limitations it may be all right, but if applied literally it may easily lead to the most serious mistakes. There can be no doubt that certain kinds of stock and certain breeds will make for success in certain circumstances, where other kinds would be almost certain to show loss or at least lack of profit. Most farmers have sufficient control over their affections to be able to like the kind of stock that will make them the most money. An unbiased study of the capabilities and peculiarities of the different breeds is a much more sensible method than to be carried away by prejudiced likes and dislikes. But if two or three breeds are likely to give equally good results then there is no reason why personal preference should not decide the point.

The breed should be chosen to suit the location and conditions where one is farming. The man who tries to supply a city milk trade with beefy Angus cattle, or the man who tries to make Jerseys rough it on a new homestead without buildings, is loading him-

self with a heavy burden of unsuitability of breed which may easily mean failure. These are extreme illustrations and not likely to occur often, but lesser errors of the same kind, differing only in degree are quite common.

### Community Breeding

It is much to the advantage of any community to unite in a uniform policy in regard to the choice of the kind of live stock to be produced. Where a community specializes on some one breed, it attains an excellence not otherwise possible and establishes a reputation for the quality and uniformity of its live stock. Anyone who is conversant with pure bred stock breeding knows that there are certain recognized centres for each of the breeds. Around these centres more high class animals of the various breeds can be found than anywhere else. A breeder living in such a centre can sell his stock more easily and at better prices than another man who is alone among breeders of another type can. These breed centres are established by groups of men, either deliberately or accidentally or by following the example of one leader, choosing a uniform ideal and all working toward the perfection of one breed. Even in the production of ordinary grade stock, community similarity is very desirable. Best prices for beef are always found where buyers can go in and get a carload or a trainload of good cattle at once. Best prices of dairy products are obtained where the output is large enough to make co-operation practicable.

There is no reason why community breeding should not be developed in the new districts of the West. The leaders of thought in each district should carefully study what breeds are most desirable and then endeavor to have the community as a whole adopt a uniform system. For the individual going into an established community it is usually advisable to follow the general opinion in regard to breeds. It is much easier to make progress, to get good sires and to dispose of them if the neighbors have the same breed. However, there may be whole communities that are following a wrong course, and in such a case it is the duty of some pioneer to start on the right track. But he must be sure of the need of change, mere personal preference is not sufficient, there must be positive proof that the popular breed should be replaced before an individual is justified in trying to upset the established ideal of a community.

### Dairying vs. Beef Raising

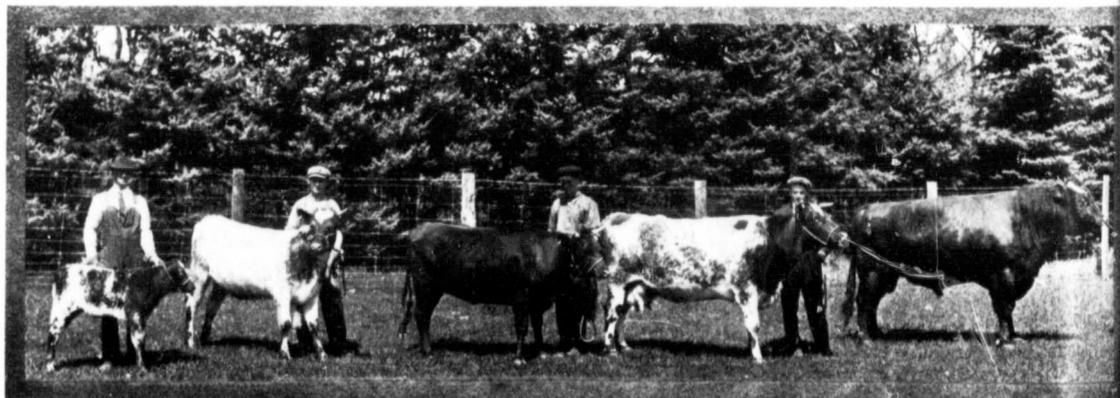
Few farms that have live stock at all are without cattle, and one of the first questions for the beginner in mixed farming is, "Shall I keep dairy or beef cattle." The answer must depend on the surrounding circumstances. The general practice of the community must be an important consideration, and individual likes and dislikes should receive some consideration; though where these two considerations oppose each other, it would be better for a man to change his location rather than to allow his prejudice to make

him a beef raiser in the midst of a dairy community or the reverse.

Where the cattle are the main feature of the farm on available land near the market, I am convinced that dairying is the profitable type of farming. A beef cow gives one calf as her whole year's produce. Unless the calf is a high priced pure bred, this is not enough revenue from a cow under these conditions. The cost of keeping a cow on valuable land and in good buildings is greater than the value of one grade calf. The only way that beef cattle can be raised on such farms is as a sideline. If wheat is the main product of the farm, then a few beef cattle may be raised probably on account of their using less waste and assisting in keeping the farm clean and requiring less attention. But if such a farmer resolves to make the cattle the main thing and drop wheat, he must either get pure bred, or have a market for high priced calves or else go in for dairying. One form of beef production that is practical on high priced land is winter steer feeding, where steers are bought in the fall and fattened over winter for the high spring market. In the United States dairying and steer feeding are gradually driving beef raising off all the close-to-market and high-priced land.

Dairying demands special attention, attention to detail and a great deal of labor, but it offers greater return from money invested. It requires convenient access to market, abundance of feed-

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Herd of Dual Purpose Shorthorns—Experimental Farm, Brandon.