

Advantages of Fall Freshening.

Each year finds more dairymen endeavoring to have their cows freshen in autumn, and from the viewpoint of profit and production this seems to be the best time of the year to have the greater number of the cows in the herd commence their lactation period. The advantages of this system are several, and, of course, like every other practice, there are some drawbacks to the method.

It has been found that cows which calve in the fall will make a higher record than if they freshen in the spring. Natural conditions assist in accomplishing this. A cow, no matter when she calves, uses all her reserve energy in endeavoring to supply the largest amount of milk possible for her offspring. If she begins her lactation period in the fall, she will, provided good and sufficient food is furnished her, give nearly, if not quite as high a flow of milk during the first months of her lactation as she will if coming in on grass. The maternal instinct within her helps to stimulate heavy milk production. This cow milks well throughout the winter, and when spring arrives and the pastures become luxuriant, she is turned upon them, and the change of diet and abundance of succulent, palatable and easily-digested, tender, nutritive grass stimulates the milk flow once more, and the cow gives nearly as large an amount during the middle months of her lactation period as she did the first months. It is true of all milk cows that, after the first few months of lactation, the flow of milk gradually falls off. Especially is this so of a cow upon dry feed, and a cow which has again conceived. The keeping up of the milk flow for the entire milking period has long been the problem of the dairyman. To do this, it is necessary to make the best use of nature, which can be done by the fall freshening of the cows. It is surprising what a stimulating effect grass has upon the milk-producing organs of the dairy cow. With a newly-calved cow that is already giving her maximum flow, the result is not so marked, and little increase in daily output is noticed, but with the cow somewhat advanced in lactation a very marked increase is noticed when the animal goes from dry feed to good pasture. This increased activity of the milk organs does not wane at once, but is continued for some time, materially increasing the yearly record of the cow.

A second important reason for winter dairying, or, more properly, the putting forth of the greatest efforts in winter, is the increased price of dairy products at this time. Of course, the manufacture of cheese does not lend itself readily to winter dairying, but where the milk is whole-saled or retailed, and where butter is made either at home or at the creamery, greater returns can be looked for during the winter. Butter and milk are almost invariably higher in price in the winter than during the warm weather. With the heavy production which naturally comes during the early part of the lactation period, this is an important factor in increasing the yearly returns from the individual cows and the entire herd.

The winter season also furnishes conditions more favorable to the production of a high grade of milk or butter than does the hot summer

weather. The cold weather is not conducive to the rapid reproduction of bacterial organisms, consequently it is easier to keep the number of undesirable organisms in the milk down to such an extent as to warrant its being wholesome. This is no mean consideration, as all who are engaged in the production of high-class milk will agree. It is also easier to produce a firm, solid butter of good texture in winter than it is in summer. The degree of heat can be regulated in the making-room in winter far easier than in summer. Extreme heat makes it very difficult to produce the best of butter. Cool weather insures less trouble.

Winter dairying also offers the advantage of furnishing employment for the hired help during what very often proves to be their off season. It is necessary, if farmers wish to retain the services of good men in the country, that they give them suitable and remunerative employment during the winter. The day of the man working for his board in winter is passed, never to return. Hired men cannot afford to remain idle four or five months out of the year, and farmers and dairymen cannot afford to let them do so, because this is the cause of many a good man leaving the country to seek employment in the cities, where factories run the entire year. Where the cows freshen in the autumn, enough work can be found to keep the farm labor profitably employed throughout the winter, and the owner is relieved of that undesirable work of hunting new men each spring.

These are by no means all the advantages to be obtained from having the most of the cows freshen in the autumn, but they should be enough to convince dairymen that there is a decided profit in the scheme, and the sooner it is generally adopted, the sooner will the output of the dairies be increased.

Give the Cow a Chance.

Experienced dairymen—not a few—will concur with C. L. Peck, a Pennsylvania breeder, who writes in *Hoard's Dairyman* as follows: "The dairyman does not know whether or not he has a good producing cow until he has given her a chance; a heifer is not developed until she is five or six years old. Some of the worst mistakes I ever made have been in passing opinion on a heifer too soon. I remember once selling a three-year-old heifer, that was well bred and had the dairy form, because her production was not up to my idea of what it should be. I sold her for less than half her real value to a plumber, telling him I did not regard her as one of my best. One night he came to my office and said: 'I called to see you about that cow you sold me. I want to know what is the matter with her.' I told him she was all right and sound so far as I knew. I asked what was the matter. He said: 'I know no sane man would sell such a cow from his herd for the price I paid, unless something was the matter. She is now giving from sixty to sixty-five pounds milk per day. I know there must be something the matter or you would not have sold her out of your herd. I can't find anything wrong, so came to you to find out what

it was.' I had simply made a mistake, and had sold one of the largest producing cows in my herd for a nominal price. I had passed judgment too early. I don't do it now."

POULTRY.

Fattening Chickens Profitable.

It never pays the poultry-raiser to sell thin chickens, no more than it pays the breeder of other classes of live stock to dispose of his animals in low condition. The home market has grown to such an extent that at the present time the demand is greater than the supply, so there is no risk to run in fattening the birds. The question is often raised, "Is it profitable to fatten chickens before selling?" Most certainly it is. Wholesale dealers in our larger cities fatten large numbers of birds annually. These birds are bought in the thin condition from the farmers. It pays them to feed them, or they would not continue the practice. If it is possible for these dealers to make a good profit feeding chickens when they must buy them and all the feed required to fatten them, how much more profitable would it be for farmers and poultry-raisers to feed their own birds, where they have the birds and the feed their own?

The usual difference in price between well-fleshed birds and those sold without being fattened is from three to seven cents per pound. Figure this on a chicken which weighs five or six pounds, and the profit becomes apparent. In feeding chickens, as in feeding steers, the profit is not only reckoned upon the gain in flesh, but also upon the original weight of the bird, which is worth much more by virtue of the better quality, which sells for the increased price.

Scrub chickens are not useful feeders. Good thrifty cockerels usually make the most economical gains, and birds of the meat or general-purpose breeds are the best for fattening purposes. Cockerels from the non-sitting or egg breeds are not the most desirable for fattening, although, if they are on hand, a much better market can be obtained for them if they are fat. A three-to-four-months-old bird will generally make the most rapid gains, and the best weight at which to begin fattening is three and one-half to four pounds. Older or larger birds cannot be fed so economically; consequently, if the market demands a heavier bird, higher prices should be received.

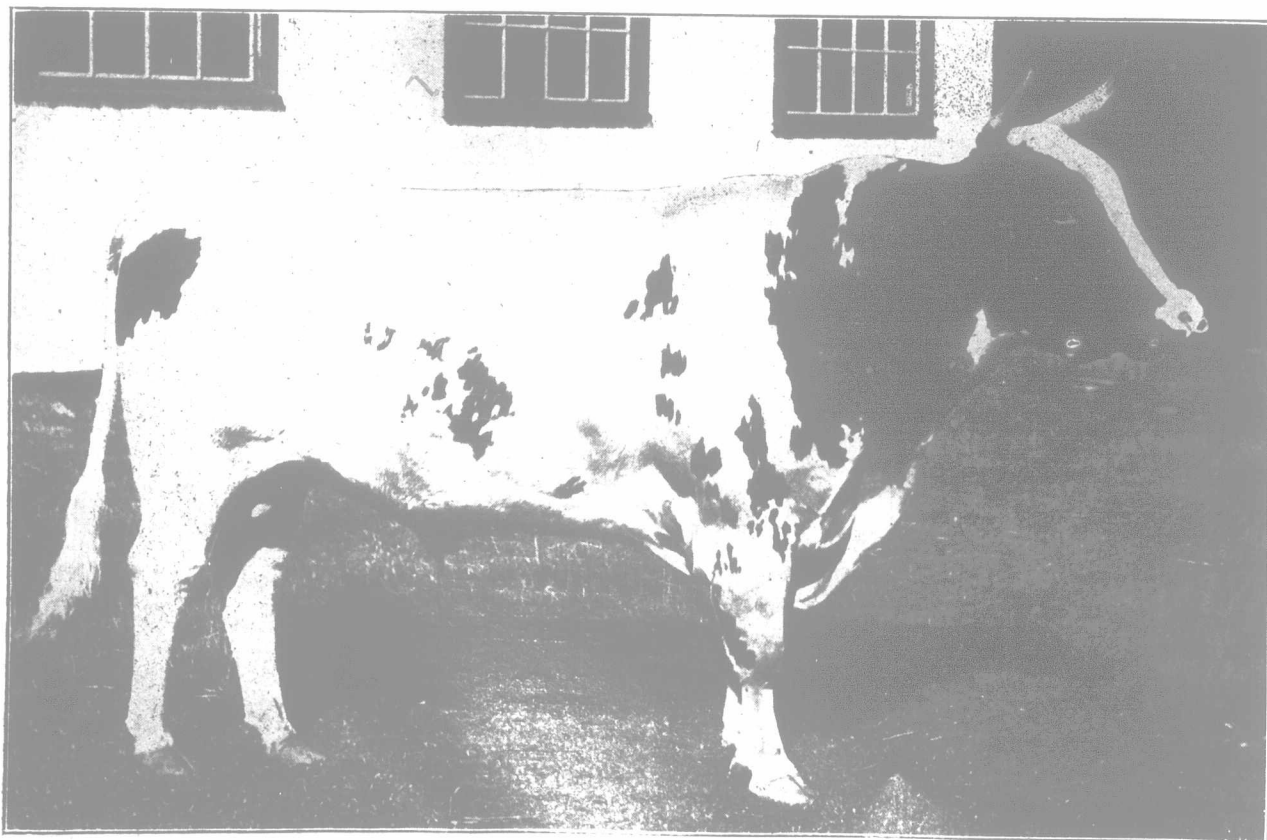
Feeding should not be continued much over three weeks. The average bird makes the best gains during the first two weeks of feeding, and after this the daily gain gradually becomes less. Twice each day is enough to feed them, and they can easily be taught to eat by lamplight. When they become accustomed to eating by lamplight, it is not well to change to daylight feeding. In other words, they must be fed regularly. In feeding, it is never advisable to give them more than they will consume quickly. It is well to let them get very hungry before commencing to feed them, and in the beginning feed only a small amount, gradually increasing it until the maximum quantity that they will consume is being fed. It is very important that the bird's appetites be kept keen, and it is also important that they be free from lice. To insure this latter condition, each bird should be dusted with some insect powder on the day that fattening is commenced.

The ration to be fed depends largely upon circumstances. Prof. Graham, of the O. A. C., found the following most satisfactory for crate-fattening: Two parts of finely-ground oats, two parts of finely-ground buckwheat, and one of finely-ground corn; to this is added sufficient sour milk to make a batter, or, ordinarily, about two to two and one-half pounds of milk to one pound of grain. Another good ration is equal parts of corn-meal middlings and buckwheat meal, and milk, as before. Barley meal can be very well substituted for the buckwheat, or oat meal for the middlings.

There has been much written upon crate-fattening, as against loose-pen fattening of chickens, and in this connection we can do no better than quote from Prof. Graham's bulletin, entitled, "Farm Poultry." Prof. Graham has the following to say with regard to these practices:

"The term, 'fattening of chickens,' has been in use for some time, but it does not exactly convey the meaning intended by the feeders of chickens. The object is to make the chickens more fleshy, with just sufficient fat to make the chicken cook well. The chickens are not intended to be abnormally fat, yet at the same time they carry considerable fat, well intermixed with lean meat.

"We have, for a number of years, conducted experiments with chickens in crates and in loose pens. We have tried about six different feeders, and the results vary. With some feeders we had equally as good results with birds in crates as with them in loose pens. We have had two feed-



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