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# FARMER'S ADVOCATE

AND HOME MAGAZINE

\* AGRICULTURE, STOCK, DAIRY, POULTRY,

HORTICULTURE, VETERINARY, HOME CIRCLE.\*

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## Editorial.

### Advantages of Stock-yard Sales.

The ranching portion of the West is a stock-raising country, and its progress can largely be measured by any improvement which simplifies the selling, or increases the average value, of live stock.

How to "profitably" raise and handle live stock on the range or farm is all-important to the man whose money or time is vested there, and that word "profitably" includes the most advantageous way of making sales. To the man who has hundreds of animals ready for disposal at the same time, animals suitable for like purposes, whether that be beef, mutton, light or heavy harness, this question of stock-yard sales will be of no individual interest, for his output is sufficient to command a visit from the best buyers. The question, however, assumes a different aspect when the small or mixed producers are considered, and as they constitute the majority of breeders, any effort to improve conditions for them is worthy of loyal support. It should also be remembered that when a good sale system is inaugurated that animals can be disposed of when they show to the best of advantage, and not held over indefinitely until buyers come.

Early in the spring of the present year a number of enterprising men started regular stock-yard sales in the metropolis of Alberta after the manner of those conducted in the leading live-stock centers of the United States, only on a smaller scale. This company began holding fortnightly sales, but regular weekly ones are now the order. At a later date, stockmen in other parts of the Territories, realizing the importance and advantage of these sales, decided to organize and do likewise. Without doubt, the purpose is well worthy all possible support, and whoever facilitates transactions between producer and purchaser confers a benefit upon the neighborhood.

Most things have small beginnings, and frequently the most advantageous movements for commercial advancement and general prosperity are not noted by outstanding prominence at their initial hour. That every sale conducted by these organizations should prove highly successful is not to be expected. However, the general trend should be upward, and such we have good reason to believe is the present experience of at least the one in the leading foothill city.

It takes time to inspire confidence both in buyer and seller. The latter has no wish to sacrifice his goods, and the former has no desire to lose valuable time, besides the cash outlay which a trip in vain would impose upon him. However, these sales are steadily increasing in popularity, and permanent progress is being made.

It is true that the machinery has not been ideal from the start, such could not be expected; nevertheless, those in charge show willingness and ability to apply helpful measures, and are ever on the outlook for weak spots, with the view of improving them. Without the confidence and hearty co-operation of both producer and consumer these markets can never become the success which they merit, and as the present successful bull sale at Calgary grew quickly, largely through the grand opening which a rapidly-filling stock country presented, combined with the trust which both producers and purchasers put in it, so will these sales, which are important, become of marked benefit only in proportion as they are wisely governed and appreciated by the public, who, in reality, will ultimately reap the greatest benefit.

### Judging Dairy Cattle.

While the only absolutely reliable tests of a cow's capabilities as a producer of milk and butter are the scales and churn for a term of ten months or a year, there are certain general characteristics of form and other features, such as femininity of appearance, quality of skin and hair, and size and shape of the udder, which, taken together, serve as tolerably safe indications in selecting a cow for dairy work. There are exceptions to all rules, and a cow is occasionally found which, while measuring well up to the standard of excellence in appearance, proves disappointing in her work in the dairy; while, on the other hand, some cows failing to conform to the approved type in their outward make-up do surprisingly good work in milk and butter production. Since, therefore, there is no infallible rule apart from a prolonged milking test, judging by inspection can only be done on the basis of the indications above mentioned, the placing of the cows in the show-ring being determined by the standard of type for the breed, and the judge, who is expected to set the standard of type for the breed, being guided by his ideal, will favor the cow combining in the greatest degree approved conformation with the tokens of usefulness in dairy production. Speaking generally, a cow to fill this bill should have a decidedly feminine appearance, a fine, slim, moderately-long neck, a bright, prominent eye, a broad forehead, slightly dishd face, broad muzzle, with large, spreading nostrils, strong lips, narrow withers, smoothly-fitting shoulders, a wide chest, with good thickness through the heart, a broad loin and strong back, ribs sprung well outward and downward from the spine, with good length and depth, long, level quarters, thin thighs and well-arched flank, fine bone, and, withal, a well-balanced udder of fair size, nearly level on the sole, running well forward on the belly and well out and up behind, not too fleshy, and with moderately large and long teats, placed well apart. The handling quality of the skin, which should be soft, pliable and not too thick or too thin, and the hair fine and furry, are indications of a good feeder, good digestion, and a quiet disposition, all of which are essential to the best dairy work. Fancy points, such as a fashionable color of hair or a rich yellow skin, are minor considerations, which should have little weight in judging as long as the color belongs to the breed. A yellow skin, as a matter of choice, is preferable to a white or bluish tint, but there is no evidence that it indicates the production of richer milk, and even yellow milk does not always show an excess of fat when tested in comparison with milk of a less pronounced color. The color of the skin, moreover, is a variable feature, changing with the feeding and condition of the animal. Even the size and prominence of the milk veins, to which so much importance is attached by some professional judges, is not an unvarying index of phenomenal milking capacity. There is no way of proving that many small and active veins are less potential in furnishing the udder with its product of milk than are fewer, more prominent and flabby ones, and as a matter of fact, some superior milkers have neither exceptionally large udders nor milk veins. The period of lactation, of course, has a great deal to do with the appearance of the udder, a fresh cow having a decided advantage in that regard over one that has been milking several months, and the judge may make allowance for this difference, where other things are more than equal, but it is difficult to make allowance for a dry cow, in comparison with one that is fresh. Dairy bulls are much

more difficult to judge than are bulls of the beef breed, as in the latter symmetry of form and thickness of flesh are principal factors in determining superiority, and these are features that would disqualify a bull of the dairy breeds, to which the standard for dairy cows applies generally, with the exception of the points allowed for udder development. Breed character and the evidences of forceful masculinity should be looked for in the bull. A strong, but not coarse, head and horn, a muscular neck, a broad chest and deep fore ribs, together with an active and spirited temperament, are signs of a robust constitution and a vigorous organization, qualities that are essential to a pre-potent sire.

### Do Not be in a Hurry to Burn the Straw.

Last winter was, we are frequently told, a hard one, on account of the scarcity of feed, a state of things that can be prevented by carefully husbanding our fodder resources.

Straw is the great winter food for the majority of the live stock on the prairie, and although of itself a meagre diet and not the sole one we would recommend, yet it is better than none at all during the winter days and nights. The empty barn or farmyard destitute of straw during the last days of winter is not a pleasant prospect for either stock or owner to face, and the next few weeks will be the last opportunity to provide for a winter of plenty, and, at least, maintenance rations for the stock. There is only one excuse for burning straw on the average Manitoba farm, and that is to get rid of vermin or fungi such as cause rust. Straw, if in the way, can be burned next spring, and, although it may not burn as readily then as right after being threshed, it is more humanitarian and sensible to give your stock the benefit of the doubt and provide plenty of fodder and bedding for them. We do not believe in straw-burning as part of farm practice at all, but we are aware of acres where few stock are kept, and the straw cannot be consumed except by fire. The blower or wind stacker will put the straw into big piles, and by trimming the edges up to eight feet from the ground, snow will not drift on and bury the piles out of sight. Digging feed out from under snow on a cold day in winter time is not conducive to plentiful rations for cattle. They are apt to get only just what they can exist upon. Semi-starvation of live stock is a very expensive process for any man's stock to undergo. Therefore, take our advice, and keep the match away from the straw-pile.

### The Separator and Fowl-weed Distribution.

One of the depressing things to the lover of agriculture is the variegated appearance of the grain fields, due to weeds, which is evidence, among other things, that the gospel of the fanning mill needs more fervent preaching. Dirty farms are more common than clean ones, one cause being the use of unclean seed. Wild oats are plentiful, and when the separator starts to work many will be rattled out upon the ground, along with other forms of seed dirt. The separator, however, has many a corner in which a fair quantity of seed can lie until rattled out upon the next farm moved to. If you have a clean farm, or are trying to rid your farm of weeds, watch the separator, especially if from a neighbor's weed-infested farm. Many methods have been devised. One is to have the separator well swept off, or run empty before coming on the