

Keeping Dairy Records.

I have been asked dozens of times if it pays to weigh the milk each milking—if once a week, or once a month, or some longer period of time, would not answer the purpose just as well, and not take so much time and trouble. I always reply, with all the emphasis I can command, "Pay, to be sure it pays, over and over again." But once a week, or once a month? No, I think not!

Suppose we weigh once a week, on Monday, for instance. It has been six days since we weighed, and the first thing we know we are half done milking before we think about its being the day to weigh. "Oh, well, to-morrow will do just as well." To-morrow is the same, and so on until the whole week is gone, and no weighing done. On the other hand, if we are in the habit of weighing every cow's milk, it becomes part of the work, just the same as the milking. The job is not complete until the milk is weighed, strained, and the number of pounds set down opposite the name of the cow from which it was drawn.

A man asked me once what I weighed my milk for, what benefit I expected to derive from it? I answered him with the following illustration, which was an actual occurrence in our own barn. In 1892 we began to weigh and test our individual cows, and keep a yearly record. Two cows stood side by side in the barn, one a Holstein and one a Jersey. The Holstein was six years old and in her prime, a very heavy milker, milking 50 pounds per day at her best. Naturally, we thought her a wonder. The Jersey was a three-year-old, with her second calf. She, as we thought, was a poor stick, only gave about 25 pounds a day. The big cow gave more than twice as much milk as she did when they were both fresh.

The Holstein got all the kind words, and any little extras in the way of feed went to her, while the other, (which, by the way, was the worst kicking cow we ever had in the barn) was not petted to any great extent. We weighed and tested the milk from those two cows for twelve months. At the end of the year our records stood like this: Dot, the Holstein, 7,816 pounds milk, 231 pounds butter-fat; Lil, the Jersey, 5,423 pounds milk, and 326 pounds butter-fat. The Holstein dropped off in her milk, while the little Jersey heifer maintained her yield nearly to calving time.

Our object then, as now, was butter-fat. It is easy to see which cow was the most profitable, and why we continued weighing our milk. I might add that it cost us about \$10 more to feed the big cow than it did the little Jersey. This is the most extreme case that ever came to my notice, but it is an actual case that occurred right here on our own farm, and as I had done a good share of the work myself, I know it to be true. Ever since that time I have been an advocate of the daily weighing and monthly testing of the milk of each cow in the herd.

There is another feature about this method of weighing milk that I have studied over many times, and I am well enough satisfied in my own mind to make the statement, yet I have no means of proving it by figures obtained from experiments, and that is this: That I get more milk from the same cows, all other conditions being the same, than when the milk is not weighed and no record kept. Now, why do I think so? It is because of the interest aroused. If one has two or more cows giving nearly the same amount of milk, it is surprising how interested one will become in each milking to see which will win, and the first thing you know you will strip and strip, give her a little more feed, be a little more careful about the water, and all these little things, just to see if her yield cannot be increased, just a little, only a pound, or even half a pound. This, I think, is especially true with hired help, provided the hired help is of the right kind.

There is nothing that can interest a certain class of hired help, except quitting time and payday. But a man that is worth having around on the farm, and who wants to earn his money, and just a little more, will interest himself in the cows more when a record is kept than he will where he just sits down and milks and gets up and pours it out; perhaps milks three or four cows before he empties his pail. Last spring we had four cows giving nearly the same number of pounds each day. My helper milked two of them and I milked two.

We raced for a month on those four cows to see which would come out ahead. Sometimes one would win, sometimes the other. I have worked and worked at my cows, trying to get "just a little more," even half a pound, and we became so interested in that race that some days we could hardly wait till milking time to see who would be ahead. And that is the reason I say that more milk will be produced if the milk is weighed than if it is not.

The amount of feed can be approximated easier and closer than can the amount of milk. If the feed is weighed whenever any great change is made, it can be computed easily: so many pounds of ensilage, bran, gluten meal, hay, etc., each

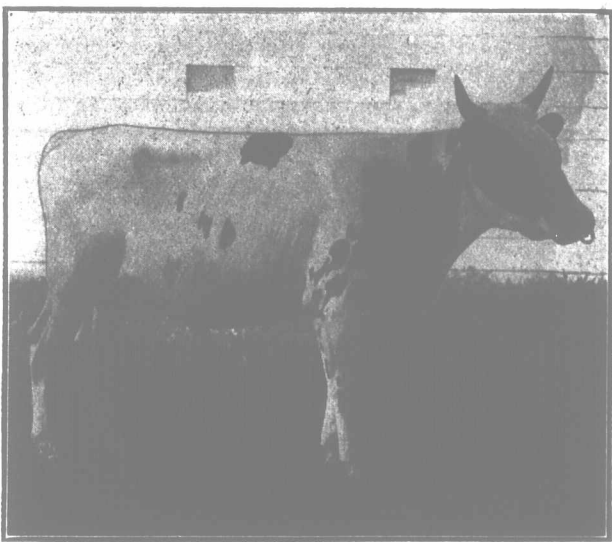
day, costing so many cents each day for the winter months; so much for grass in summer—then balance accounts, and see on which side each cow belongs, whether she deserves a little more care and feed, or does she go in the "for sale" column.

There can be many little things learned by weighing the milk; for example, how much they will shrink on account of flies, how much they lose when the milk stool is broken over their backs, how much they will fall short about 24 hours before a change in the weather, how much difference there is in milkers, and one other of prime importance to me. If I can feed a little more, and get enough more milk to pay for it, then I want to feed it. So I gradually increase the feed as long as the milk increases, or, if I am feeding too much, or more than the cow is paying for, then decrease the feed until the milk flow begins to decrease. The scales show it mighty quick, too.

There are so many advantages in keeping a careful record of the dairy that I could not begin to enumerate them. I feel that there are some things absolutely essential to the successful operation of a dairy: First, the man; second, the cows; third, the feed; fourth, the scales and tester.—[V. D. Macy, in Jersey Bulletin.]

The Mating Time for Cattle.

The time is fast approaching when the breeder of high-class cattle will consider the mating of such stock with a view to having the calves come of suitable ages for the various classes at the big shows. His example can be followed, however, by the average farmer who wishes to get the maximum results from his cattle at the smallest cost to the animals themselves. In addition, also, he now has the opportunity of sizing up the value of his cows under natural and open-air conditions. If, after a summer's run at grass, the



Holehouse Pilot, Imp —22596—

Ayrshire bull, one year old. First at Western Fair, London, 1906. Bred by Robt. Woodburn, Galston, Scotland. Sire, Holehouse Dairy King. Owned by Wm. Thorn, Lynedoch, Ontario.

kine are ill-favored, in low condition, or unhealthy, such should be culled out and not bred from. There may be extenuating circumstances for a cow or heifer being in low condition in the fall—for instance, if she be an exceptionally heavy milker—but, generally speaking, the thin critter is not a desirable type to let perpetuate its kind. Summer time is the period when all nature stores up energy under normal conditions, and it is, therefore, at that time the animal economy is in the best state for the act and purpose of reproduction. The extreme heat of the summer is over, and the keen fall air is tonic enough to key the animal organism up to the proper pitch for such purposes. Not only so, but if the male has been properly tended and cared for in the matter of food and exercise, he is in better condition to hand down a heritage of excellence, in either dairy or beef lines, according to his breed and type. Another advantage is that, by breeding the cows so that they drop their calves early in the fall, they will milk well all winter, when dairy products are high in price, and will take a new lease of productivity in the spring if placed on good pastures. Not only that, but the "resting time" for the dam comes in the hottest weather, when the human species take holidays. The cow has not then to give a big milk flow as well as feed the calf in embryo. This question of mating has, in the past, been looked at altogether from the standpoint of the intent and purpose of the progeny, but it is also well to consider the sires and dams if maximum quality is to be gotten in the offspring, as well as persistency in breeding in the parents.

"Bagging" Cows.

It is an old practice for exhibitors of dairy cattle to let the cows go without milking from 24 to 48 hours before they are judged. Is it right to jeopardize the future usefulness of good dairy cows in this manner? We can see no just reason for it. A judge whose decisions rest largely upon the fullness and size of the udder is not a fit person to award premiums at fairs or dairy shows.

At the National Dairy Association last winter, the cows were not bagged, and we believe the judge was in no way handicapped in placing the animals because their udders were not filled to the bursting point. The night before the animals were judged a man watched every cow milked, and examined her udder to see that each cow was milked clean. The animals were judged the next morning at nine o'clock, and milked in the ring. This method filled the udder quite enough for the judge to estimate its capacity, and milking was postponed but three or four hours, which, under ordinary circumstances, would not injure the cow in any way.

Just why breeders of pure-bred cattle do not protest against bagging their animals is more or less a mystery to those who have carefully considered the matter. Those that we have talked with about this practice say they dislike to do it, but the other fellow lets his cows bag up, therefore, in order to show their cows on equal conditions, they must let cows go for a day or two without milking. If the animal should seek relief by leaking some of her milk, colloidion is sometimes placed on the ends of the teats.

What cruelty and absolute nonsense for intelligent dairymen to be practicing. Why would it not be a good thing for the breeders, as they come together at the different fairs, to talk this matter over, and insist on the fair officials to pass rulings to prevent the pernicious practice of bagging. —[Hoard's Dairyman.]

Value of Tried Sires.

The almost universal tendency among breeders is to purchase young and untried, and hence uncertain, sires, while many older ones that have proven sure, and successful in begetting offspring of desirable type, quality and productiveness are allowed to go to the shambles for want of a buyer at anything over butcher's price. We are led to refer to this mistaken policy by a timely article in the Nebraska Farmer, in which the writer says:

"We do not know all the motives that prompt men to do this, though a few of them are evident. We suppose that the buyer prefers the young sire because of his entire years of usefulness being before him. Others say that the mature sire is too heavy for young females, and others seem to have an aversion to mature and tried sires because they feel that the seller is disposing of them through some fault.

"All of this is wrong. In the first place, a bull that is four or five years old, or even seven or eight years old, may yet be a sure and reliable sire at his twelfth year, and even older. Furthermore, these mature bulls are invariably sold under a positive guarantee of sure producers. Thus, the mature sire will be a breeder for many years beyond the average age at which such animals are sold. Second, the size of the mature bull, as refers to breed young females, is a fair consideration only in part. In cattle, this condition is rarely encountered if the heifers are not bred too young and are as growthy as they should be according to age. In hogs, it is only applicable when the boar is in high condition and a breeding crate is not used. And thirdly, the man who feels that mature sires are offered for sale only through some fault is a natural skeptic in his belief of the purity or righteousness of any man's motives, and is hampered and impeded in his natural progress by his narrow ideas.

"That the average tried sire is sold away below his value is without question, and is a further evidence that the spirit of speculation in people is one of the greatest factors in the failures of men. We do not know what better evidence of worth or value a man could ask in a sire than to witness his achievements as a sire. It is not like buying a 'pig-in-a-poke' to buy a tried sire, while in buying the young and untried sire one's operations are only guided by ancestral lineage, which is very often lost sight of in judging an animal whose rotund form is more of fat than of blood lines, that will insure a propensity to transmit this characteristic and others of equal importance. One of the most popular and common errors committed by farmers and stockmen, and breeders as well, is the tendency to look only upon the animal in question, without reference to the individuality and excellence of his ancestors, and his own ability as a sire when proven by a crop or two of his get.

"In the forthcoming sales of pure-bred cattle this season we know of several mature and tried bulls to be offered, and we feel perfectly confident that not a single one of these bulls will sell at