In the Home of the Holstein

My Observations in the Edam Cheese District of Holland

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My visit to Holland was unfortunately curtailed owing to want of time, but I was able to make a brief investigation in the famous Edam cheese district of that country.

An interesting farm is that of Simon Pronk, at Broek, in Waterland. The farm is about 50 acres in extent, on which 40 head of cattle are kept, of which 30 are milch cows. Two-thirds of the total pasture-grounds are used for hay-making. The soil is very fertile for grazing-land, consisting of a thick layer of black earth under which there is a hard layer of clay and a peat subsoil. No cheese is made on this farm, as all the milk is sold for consumption in the Town of Amsterdam, for which about 13 cts. a gallon is received in the months of November, December, January and February, and about 11 cts. a gallon in the remaining months. Milk with less than 2.85 per cent. of butter-fat is refused. During half the year the cattle are fed in the stable with hay, and with pulp which is obtained from the beet-sugar factory at Halfweg. This pulp is mixed with linseed-meal, linseed-cake, maize, and a little molasses. The principle of heavy feeding is adopted here, as the cows which are milked are at the same time fattened.

A Typical Edam Cheese Farm

A visit was also paid to the cheese-farm of I. Bruyn, and is said to be a typical farm for the making of Edam cheese. Formerly Edam cheese was exclusively made at the farms twice a day, immediately after the cows were milked. This has been changed. As a rule, cheese is at present being made at the farm only in the morning; the milk of the evening before is left untouched during the night, and after the small layer of cream that has formed is taken off, is mixed with the full morning milk and then worked into Edam cheese.

In a Dutch Cheese Factory

A visit was made to the cheese-factory, *Hoop doet leven*, at Monnikendam. The building is of brick, and is well appointed. About 800 gallons of milk a day is received at the height of the season, from which about 200 cheeses (Edams) are made. This is a cooperative factory with 13 shareholders, and milk is also bought from six farmers who are not shareholders. The milk is bought irrespective of its butter-fat content. About nine cents a gallon is received by the suppliers for their milk, and about one cent a gallon is calculated to be made from the whey. As a rule, in the Netherlands, milk for the manufacture of dairy-produce is bought and paid for according to the percentage of butter-fat contained therein. I noticed that the whey-tank in this factory was lined with porcelain tiles, cemented in with pure cement. In discussing this with the manager he advised me that the acid in the whey did not affect the tiles, but eats into the cement that holds the tiles in position. Judging by the information I received, the use of the porcelain tiles is an improvement upon the ordinary concrete whey-tank, being much more easily kept clean, and lasting longer without having to be repaired.

Our journey was continued to Volendam, from whence the De Beemster district was inspected. This block of country is very fertile, having at one time been under water. The Beemster has a surface of 18,125 acres, which was formerly a lake, but in 1613 was pumped dry and surrounded by a dyke. This is named in Dutch a *droog-maker-j* (land which is made dry). The Beemster lies thirteen feet below sea level. The water is kept at a fixed level in the ditches by three pumping plants (*stoomgemaal*). The soil which overlies a thick layer of heavy clay with peat underneath is remarkably good grazing-ground. An interesting feature is the division in square blocks of 850 acres, which are split up into 20 farms. These are situated quite regularly along beautifully paved roads which cross each other at right angles. The farm houses have all the same shape—a square building, of which the roof ends in a point. The idea has been a square hay-stack, in the middle of which the roof is lengthened to four sides, so that room is made—(1) for the cow stable, (2) for the stable for the young cattle, (3) for an open space (for carts and implements), and (4) for a place where the farmer lives.

Ferdinand—A Representative of the Type We Prefer in America.

There are really three breeds of Dutch cattle — a milk breed, a beef breed and a dual purpose breed. All three are more or less interbred. The four yearling bulls illustrated on this page were all exhibited and sold at the last central bull show at Dhmaer, and are all representatives of the "Holland" or milk breed of Dutch cattle, the kind we prefer in America. Our correspondent, Mr. D. Schoonmaker, of Hoogkarspel, writes that a two-year-old heifer of this type, in his herd, produced 11,536 lbs. of 3.41 per cent milk in 305 days.

Natural Gas on Every Farm

As the peat layer develops considerable gas, this is gathered in a gas-holder and conveyed to the house for lighting and cooking, the cost of the holder being about $250. Each farm has a small orchard in front of the house. The pasture stretches out behind the house in a long strip of land, which is again divided lengthways into two pieces. Alternately one piece is for hay, and is manured every year (manure with a very little straw); the other piece is used as pasture-ground. The farm is generally 46¼ acres, on which is usually kept 16 to 17 milking-cows, four yearlings, four calves, eight breeding-ewes, 25 lambs, and one horse, and also pigs and a number of chickens and geese. Most of the farms are rented for 100 guelders per hectare, or $16.20 an acre, and sometimes as high as 130 guelders, or $20.25 an acre. The price of the land is about 3,000 guelders per hectare, $486 an acre.

Frans 7, a Breedy Chap.

Large numbers of cattle are fattened on the pasture, and the Beemster is a well-known district for its favorable results. During the last few years the farming operations in this block has almost entirely been confined to dairying.

As the grass and hay is very nutritious, it is possible to breed in the Beemster a big heavy cow (750 kilogrammes, or 1,650 lb., live weight), with a milk-yield of 900 gallons, and more during a lactation period, and is at the same time a very good beef-producer. Therefore the Beemster dairy-farmer requires a large frame, well ribbed, and short loins, and does not like a narrow breast in his dairy stock. The cattle in the Beemster belong to the black-and-white Holland breed (Friesian), which is in foreign countries often wrongly called "Holstein" or "Holstein-Friesian," a name which is quite misleading, and originates from the North American trade, to which country De Beemster has exported a considerable number of excellent specimens. Formerly the cattle were more white than black, but now the contrary begins to appear, due to the requirements of the trade that has developed with foreign countries. A good many farmers are rather cow-keepers than genuine breeders, and therefore many herds are not uniform, and have not the quality one might expect under such very favorable natural conditions.

Yields of Dutch Cows

Some very fine cows were seen on the farm of P. Leeman, one of the cows being credited with a milk-yield of 1,000 gallons as a two-year-old; the mother of this cow at six years gave a milk-yield of 1,600 gallons. This farmer also secured first honors for one of his cows at the show that has just been held, and I think it is admitted that his herd of dairy cows is the best in this district. There is a bull association in the district; and a word might here be said about the

(*Concluded on page 9*)

Frans Albert, a Fine Yearling.

DeGroff, Lots of Substance Here.