

# The Farmer's Advocate

*"Persevere and Succeed."*

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### EDITORIAL.

Yields surpassing estimates is the rare experience of the West this year.

Start the New Year by keeping farm accounts. Guesswork and Profit are but chance acquaintances, and seldom take warmly to each other.

To all our readers a Happy and Prosperous New Year. Happiness, of course, we cannot guarantee, but careful reading of this paper, with thrifty and judicious practice of its precepts, will prove a great aid to prosperity. That lies with yourself.

The struggle in Britain is between Progress and Privilege. That struggle can end only one way. It may be long-drawn-out, marked by many reverses and apparent reactions, but sooner or later Progress must prevail. Let us hope the first battle may be decisive.

He who breeds and speculates in live stock, with a view simply to immediate profit, dare hardly ignore popular fads and prejudices. He who breeds for the future, ambitious to figure as an improver of live stock, dare not heed them. We need more live-stock improvers.

This issue contains the half-yearly index, including articles and illustrations from June to December. It is published at some inconvenience and considerable expense, but this is cheerfully incurred in the hope that it may prove valuable to many readers as a key affording means of ready reference to the stores of information published in each twenty-six issues. Pile the copies in consecutive order, and stitch together, with the index number on top of the pile. It is very little trouble, and you will feel well repaid when hastily seeking the answer to some puzzling question.

A correspondent writes: "A place of pre-eminence was rightly given in your remarkable Christmas Number to the lucid article, 'Education for the Farm,' by John Dearness, of the London, Ont., Normal School. The sons and daughters of the farm have a right to the best education, but are they getting it from the schools of the day? Every parent, every school trustee, every county-school inspector, and every teacher, should read, mark and digest this article, the application of which in the schools of this land will bring their work up to a better standard, improve the life and profits of the farm, help to solve the farm-labor problem, and check the drift of young men and women from country to city."

Many of us are still inclined to make the labor problem an excuse for not growing remunerative crops. Grow more of the crops that give the large returns. Pay liberal wages to good men, and hire them by the year, treating them, if they behave themselves, as you would wish your son treated in a neighbor's home. Reduce the amount of human labor needed by adopting labor-saving methods, substituting horse-power wherever possible for hand labor, two-horse implements for the single style, and four horses where two have been commonly employed. Eliminate needless labor, seek to insure efficient performance of the rest, follow the remunerative branches, and profits may be derived, quite unknown in the old days of cheap labor. Management is the key.

### Canadian Cattle Trade, West and East.

When corn-fed American cattle begin selling at \$10 per hundred pounds, live weight, and over on the open market, in earload lots, and the Beef Trust talks of calling for supplies (in competition with Great Britain) from the plains of Argentina by subsidized steamships, consumers and producers of meat alike begin to rub their eyes. "It looks like a beef-cattle famine ahead," said an old-time drover recently to "The Farmer's Advocate," though he was not yet counting on 10-cent cattle. Very generally throughout Ontario and the other Eastern Provinces of Canada, dairy cattle are crowding in on the higher-priced lands. United States Secretary of Agriculture Wilson, in his late annual message, reports the breaking up of the American cattle ranges. F. M. Logan, in the Christmas "Farmer's Advocate," recorded the displacement of beef-cattle-ranching in British Columbia by dairying and fruit-growing. And the valuable report on the cattle trade of Western Canada, from the Department of Agriculture, Ottawa, by Dr. J. G. Rutherford, Veterinary Director-General and Live-stock Commissioner, declares that in Alberta and Saskatchewan the handwriting of ranching is already on the wall. In the Peace River country it may persist for a while, but there, as elsewhere on the continent, the farmer will undo the cowboy. Dr. Rutherford's long and intimate acquaintance with the West, and thorough investigations into the commercial live-stock trade of Canada, makes this report timely and valuable. The Western cattle business has been subject to many and serious disabilities and disadvantages. Among these have been the winter losses from sudden storms, like those of the seasons of 1886-7 and of 1906-7, when about half of the range cattle were swept away for want of shelter and fodder; deterioration from the use of cross-bred bulls; and, last of all, the heavy handicap of a 2,000-mile railway haul to the nearest Eastern shipping port, and then 3,000 miles on sea, so that they arrived at the British lairage "gaunt and shrunken," the profits absorbed by middlemen and transportation companies—a sinfully wasteful business so far as the producer is concerned, and cruel, besides. Wild, grass-finished cattle should, therefore, not be shipped for export. The Americans long ago realized the folly of shipping range cattle alive to Europe, and adopted the system of a few months' finishing on grain. Anyone who has spent some time in the great foreign cattle markets, like those of Liverpool and London, is aware, as Dr. Rutherford points out, that the properly-finished cattle of Eastern Canada land, as a rule, in excellent condition, ranking closely up with the more fancy corn-fed States beefs, and what the Commissioner advises for the West is proper housing and winter feeding, utilizing to profit the abundance of available coarse grains and fodder, getting the cattle ready for spring, when shipping facilities are better. The best way to market any frozen wheat is also in the form of live stock. The percentage of dry-fed as against grass-fed cattle arriving at Winnipeg has increased from over 16 per cent. of the total to over 48 per cent., from 1906 to 1908. That the system suggested would be wise for the West for other reasons, is pointed out by the Commissioner, who observes that, "Already are to be found in these new Provinces districts yielding little more than half the returns per acre they did some years ago; and while the yield, by continuous cropping, is going down, the land is becoming foul with weeds." For this, the remedy is mixed farming, manuring, and a proper rotation, which incidentally will reduce the danger from early frost. If the production of beef is to be continued, it must be marketed in good condition, and at reasonable cost; and one of the

necessities for reaching outside markets with the surplus over what is needed for Western home requirements, is better transportation methods, which the Railway Commission has undertaken to bring about.

Dr. Rutherford points out that many advantages would accrue from a properly-financed and conducted dead-meat trade, under effective public control, chief of which is elimination of the unavoidable shrinkage, owing to the enormous distance which the live Western cattle must be shipped. In connection with the inauguration of a successful meat trade, whether East or West, one essential is a fairly continuous supply of good cattle. Such a trade would also be a matter of national safety, in view of the possibilities of the Canadian live-cattle business being imperilled through the danger of infection with such disorders as foot-and-mouth disease from the adjoining States. In fact, only by the prompt and strong representations of the Dominion Live-stock Commissioner has such disaster been averted.

Dr. Rutherford concludes by advising what "The Farmer's Advocate" has steadily contended for years, viz., that it would be a most short-sighted policy to relinquish the present export business in live fat cattle to Great Britain. Our only foreign competitor there is the United States, whose home consumption will soon leave little for export, and, in any event, it is better to have two strings to one's bow, as the one line of trade will steady and balance the other. One clear inference from the terse and lucid report of Dr. Rutherford is that the feeder in Eastern Canada has a strong advantage in nearness to sea-ports and great centers of population; but, though he cannot dictate high prices for the cattle on his increasingly valuable land, he can secure greater returns by properly finishing his own beefs, reared from cows of the beef-milk form, and growing more and better corn.

### Value of a Ton of Manure.

What is a ton of manure worth? Upon the answer to this question depends, in most cases, the whole profit of live-stock husbandry. The answer, however, while of the greatest importance, is far from easy. Nor is it constant in all circumstances. It varies with the kind of animal by which produced, with the stage of its development (whether growing, milking or fattening), with the feeds fed and the kind and quantity of litter used, with the tightness of the stable floor, and with the amount of urine saved. It varies also with the locality where produced, with the distance it has to be hauled in order to be applied, with the physical nature and drainage of the soil to which it is applied, and with its poverty; i. e., its need of manure. It varies with the kind and value of the crops to be produced. A man raising strawberries, for example, can afford to pay more for fertilizing material than one growing a less remunerative crop. The value of the manure depends still further upon when and how it is to be applied; whether, for instance, it may be used fresh in such form that most of its potential value may be derived, or whether it has to be held for months, subjected to heating and leaching till a considerable portion of its value is wasted, and then perhaps applied to an undrained soil. Upon all these and yet other factors unmentioned the answer to the question depends. It is, therefore, an extremely complicated question, but one that badly needs an answer.

Our opinion is that far too low a value has been placed upon manure. It has been customary to credit it with some such purely nominal value as twenty-five or fifty cents a ton, or perhaps, in figuring profits of stock-raising, to set it over against cost of attendance, and let it go at that.