

LIVE STOCK.

Producing Stockers.

Editor "The Farmer's Advocate":

The farmer desirous of feeding steers for export, or for the best home market, will usually look for cattle running from 1,000 to 1,200 pounds live weight in October or November, when he wishes to start fattening operations. The price he must pay for this sort is controlled very largely by supply and demand. With prices ruling too high, he need not buy, or if the roughage must be consumed, then most likely he can buy steers to run over on roughage alone, and be almost certain to clear himself. Then, again, he always has the chance of good prices in the spring. In my experience of 12 years' buying and feeding steers, only once have I found it impossible to make a profit, even though buying prices have several times seemed prohibitive. I might just mention, too, that the year of loss was not the year of least promise at buying time.

So much for the feeder, the buyer of stockers. What of the breeder, the producer of stockers? Is he always sure of fair returns for labor and feed? I fear not; at least, not always. He, unlike the feeder, must start his operations from one to six years before selling, and so can never hope to have the faintest idea of the price he will get. Looked at in this way, one might think raising stockers an absolute gamble. Such, however, is not exactly the case, since, given the right class of stock, and good management, there is no doubt stockers can be brought to the right weight at a cost that will be below the average selling price, if not in every case below the actual selling price. Conditions, however, must be right in every way—good cattle, cheap pasturing, suitable but cheap feeds, and low cost for housing and care.

As an analysis of cost to produce the stocker two and a half years old, weighing 1,100 pounds, I would submit the following:

Cost to produce calf when dropped.....	\$ 5.00
Feed, first summer, including care.....	6.00
Feed, first winter, inc. care and housing...	8.00
Feed, second summer, including care.....	5.00
Feed, second winter, inc. care and housing...	8.00
Feed, third summer, including care.....	5.00

Total cost at 2½ years old \$37.00

Returns—1,100 pounds, at 3½ cents (probably an average price), \$41.25.

There would be, in addition, the manure for the two winters, say 10 tons, at \$1.00 per ton. This would seem to show the manure the chief profit, which is probably the case, save, of course, the profit due to selling of products on the farm, etc., which is really the most important consideration of all.

A few explanatory remarks on items of cost might be in place. The cow being supposedly a milk-producer, one can hardly fix the cost of production, since preparation for producing milk is necessary, and the calf must be produced, whether or no. Five dollars per calf for eight years, the average bearing life of a cow, will equal the original value of cow at first calving. This would,

therefore, in my opinion, be a fair value to put on the calf at birth.

In ten years' experience of keeping exact record of cost of feeding calves, May 1st to November 1st, the cost has averaged around \$6.00, all items included at market prices, and skim milk charged at 15 cents per 100 pounds; practically no whole milk allowed. Whole milk is much too expensive feed. No profits are probable where it is fed for more than a fortnight or so.

The first winter the calf will require 200 lbs. meal, two tons silage and roots, 300 or 400 lbs. hay, and some straw, costing in all, in my experience, about \$8.00. The pasture cost, of course, is another arbitrary item. Everyone must fix it for himself, but some pasture is dear at \$2.00 per season, and other cheap at \$10.00.

The second winter no meal is necessary, and not any more hay, if even as much as the first year. In fact, it is common practice to run over on straw. In my experience, straw-feeding costs less, but gives poorer returns than where silage or roots are used. The cost of wintering affixed, \$8.00, is taken from a number of years' work. There remains the pasture for the third summer. This would not cost any more than the second summer.

Very frequently, poorly-pastured and badly-wintered cattle have to be kept till 3½ years of age, instead of 2½, to reach the desired weights. This adds very materially to the cost of production, and must almost always, in Eastern Canada, at least, result in loss.

On the range, the production of profit-producing stockers from purely beef-type cows is generally an impossibility. This, for the reason that to the cost of feed for the steer would have to be added about \$25 for cost of keeping cow. This would bring the cost of stockers to over \$50 at 2½ years, which would be a figure impossible to realize on the average, although often obtainable for good specimens.

Baby-beef production—that is, the feeding off at ages varying from one year to twenty months—is very profitable for the man with the skill and inclination to do it. Here, again, however, the very greatest care is necessary to keep down cost. Whole milk must not be fed for longer than two or three weeks. Just the right kinds of meal in moderate quantities should be given, and an abundance of the right sort of roughage properly fed. Oats, bran, corn, oil-cake meal, gluten and barley for meal, turnips, clover hay, alfalfa, good corn silage, a small amount of straw, etc., for roughage, will do the deed. No mistake should be made thinking that heavy mealings means rapid growth. Kindness and comfort mean a very great deal.

Then, one must get the steers to the block as young as possible. Baby beef is likely to be most profitable when sold at about 18 months old, or somewhat younger still. They should weigh 1,000 pounds, on the average, at 18 months.

J. H. GRISDALE, Agriculturist.

Central Exp. Farm.

Ontario farmers face the winter with confidence, notwithstanding the comparative shortage of fodder in some sections. The experience of the last two years has taught them how to make good use of their feed.

Our English Correspondence.

HORSE CENSUS IN BRITAIN.

The army-remount question was the subject of an address by F. D. Ackland, Under Secretary for War, before the Northallerton Agricultural Society. The War Office will take a census of all the horses in the country in December, dividing them roughly into draft, light draft and riding horses. Then the police are to select people in different districts to be responsible for collecting the horses required in any emergency. In case of necessity, 120,000 horses will be required, and the State has power, under the law, to take from any owner a horse or vehicle necessary for the purpose of the army. This can be done at a moment's notice, on tendering a fair price. Should the owner of the horse not be satisfied he can appeal to the county court to have a fair price settled.

The Government believes that there are plenty of horses suitable for the purpose, and claims that it is better for the owners to sell at a fair price than to have a foreign officer come in and take the lot without payment. In case of invasion, horses will be required immediately, and the Government census is to show where they may be had.

Major Fife, a War-office horse-buyer, addressed the Association, and strongly advised farmers not to dock young horses. The Army did not want Hackneys. Let a horse have a tail with which to swish the flies, and he would thrive twice as well. They could dock him later if they thought fit, but army officers would not buy him docked.

There has been considerable discussion by farmers' societies of the proposed census, and the opinion is expressed that three-year-olds are useless for army purposes, and that the Government should offer £55 or £60 for four-year-olds, and make their offers direct—not through dealers who take most of the profits. The question of supply is declared to be almost entirely one of price.

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It has been announced in Parliament that a portion of the new development grant is to be used for the improvement of British live stock. This should be a fruitful expenditure, as the number of live stock in Great Britain does not bear the same proportion to population that it does in many other countries. For instance, in cattle, our proportion is 1 to 5½, while Denmark has 1 to 1½; Germany, 1 to 3; and the United States, 1 to 1½. In pigs, the disproportion is even greater, we having but 1 to 11 of the population, against Denmark's 1 to 2, and the United States' 1 to 1¼. Only in sheep do we compare favorably, and even here we do not supply ourselves, and have to import largely.

It is claimed that British farmers might largely increase their production of live stock by keeping better animals; for, in spite of the high standard of many herds and flocks in the country, there are far too many inferior animals kept. More attention should be given to the growing of remunerative forage crops on a larger scale; for instance, alfalfa, that great standby of French farmers, might be much more largely grown. British farmers too often farm more acres than their capital warrants, and thus cannot properly stock their acreage, and smaller holdings would be an advantage to both farmer and community.

How enormous is the market which might be catered for by the home farmer, is well shown by the rapid growth of imports of beef, mutton and pork in the last twenty years. In 1888 we imported of these products to the value of £14,000,000; in 1898 the value was £31,000,000, and by 1908 the total value had grown to £41,000,000—a stupendous total.

RISE IN MEAT PRICES.

English householders are confronted with higher meat bills. Both beef and mutton have had a sharp rise in price, and mutton, especially, after a period of exceptionally low prices, looks like being quite dear.

At present, foreign mutton is quoted as high as home-killed. However, Argentine cattle and sheep dealers are already taking advantage of higher prices to send larger supplies, so that by Christmas there will probably be ample to supply all demands.

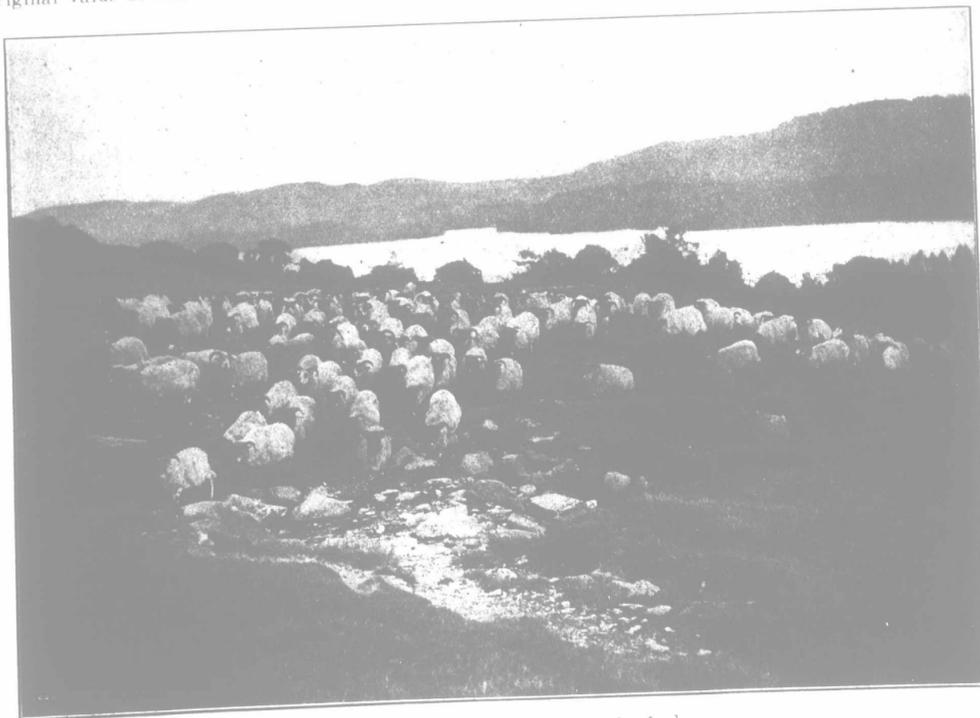
SHORTHORN MILK RECORDS.

The milk records of the Lincoln Red Shorthorns owned by John Evens are always of interest. Some capital yields are recorded amongst the cows that calved in 1908. One cow, in 413 days, gave 15,081 pounds of milk, an average of 36.5 pounds per day. Seven of the herd exceeded 10,000 pounds, and the whole fifty head in the herd averaged over 8,000 pounds.

These figures amply justify the care which has been given in selecting for milk production, and show a very high standard of intelligence in management. Mr. Evens' herd is justly famous throughout the country, and is a consistent winner at all the leading shows.

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Some heavy yields of wheat are noted from various districts, and one field at Beeston, Notts, seems to have the record so far this season, with 68 bushels to the acre. While this field was grow-



Sheep on the Shore of Loch Ard.