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The Shorthorn as a Milker

Robert Miller, Stouffville, Ont.

The milking qualities of Shorthorns can, no doubt, be improved, particularly in regard to certain families, or strains. This is not an undertaking, however, that may be rushed into by everybody, or great injury will be done the breed as beef producers. A great many individuals give as much milk as can reasonably be looked for in animals that have good feeding form, or that excel in thickness of flesh. It would scarcely be possible, however, to attain the same degree of perfection in milk production that the breed has reached as beef producers. In other words, Shorthorns stand at the very top as beef producers; they could not be bred to stand at the top as milk producers, without destroying their beefing qualities, though it is possible to have fairly good beefing qualities, and milk producing powers as well. Their general inclination is, and will continue to be, in their power to produce a reasonable amount of milk, to cross on the native, or thin-fleshed cattle of any kind, and get an animal that will produce a reasonable amount of thickness of flesh, and at the same time give a good return at the pail, if bred from a milking dam.

The milking Shorthorns of England, are, in many cases, bred very much to what is considered the dairy type. They are narrow in front, with considerable width, and depth, behind. They are not great milkers and beefers as well, but in some few cases both qualities might reasonably be claimed for them. Extreme milk production is not looked for in an English dairy herd, but rather a fair amount from each cow is required, together with a calf that will make a good bull, to head such a herd, or a first class steer, or a heifer, to mature for renewing the herd.

Ninety per cent. of the milk produced in the city of London is taken from Shorthorn cows. At the same time these cows have produced the feeders to furnish the home-fed beef for the same market.

It is something the same there as here. When a man wants to buy a bull to place at the head of his dairy herd, be it Shorthorn, or anything else, he limits himself to from \$12 to \$25, while those who are in need of bulls to head the herds kept for breeding beef animals, with no pretensions to extra dairy qualities, will pay anywhere from \$100 up. Here, good bulls, with milking ancestors, can be sold with difficulty for from \$50 to \$100, while good bulls for the breeding of high-class feeding animals, are being sold every day for from \$300 up, and this is not a good year. There must be a reason for this; perhaps it is to be found in the statement of an officer of the Dairyman's Association, "that the average dairy cow in Canada does not pay." If the average cow does not pay, then the whole of them are kept at a loss, or they lose money as a whole.

If there is not a great profit in money from dairying it is poor business. There is a great loss in hard labor amounting, in most cases, to drovings on the part of both the women and the men of the farm, not to say anything of the girls and boys being too often worked beyond their strength.

Caring for the Sow

Daniel DeGruy, Perth Co., Ont.

I have my brood sows in good condition at breeding time. There is a pen for them to go into whenever it suits them. In this way they get plenty of exercise.

A week before farrowing I put the sow in a box stall in the cow stable, and feed her chopped oats and bran, equal parts, wet in a sort of slop. She

will take care of herself there. After farrowing I do not feed her until she looks for it, and then very lightly—only a little bran and water in the shape of a drink for two or three days.

I keep the young pigs as dry as possible, and leave space under the stall doors for them to go out into the stable. When a week old they will run around the stable, and grow nicely. I let the sow out every day for a short time in the yard for exercise.

When the little ones are over three weeks old and begin to eat a little, I start to feed them. They are fed outside the box stall door, and continue growing right along. When six or seven weeks old, I wean the pigs, and the sow is ready to breed again in three or four days.

Lambing Time

The lambing season is the most interesting period for the sheep raiser. If, however, he has done his duty by his breeding ewes, up to this period he need have little anxiety as the result.

The ewe should be kept in strong flesh but not in the fat condition the butcher would have. A dry forage ration of clover or pea straw is very suitable for pregnant ewes, with a daily allowance of grain, etc., as the lambing season approaches. Oats or wheat straw is recommended for this purpose. Some corn silage, or better, perhaps, two or three pounds of cut turnips should also be given daily during the winter.

The lambing season in Canada, for the average sheep raiser, comes on about the middle of April, extending well through May. At this time of the year, as warm quarters are not necessary as earlier in the year, lambs dropped in the later spring require less care. The grass is then far enough advanced to give the ewes a chance to nurse well and the lambs keep on growing. Late lambing also allows for cheaper winter feeding of the ewe flock.

If the lambing season begins before the sheep are in the fields a careful watch should be kept of the flock, and the ewe about to lamb should be placed in a separate pen. Also when the flock is out in the field and the nights are cold the ewes should be put under shelter, or kept in a dry place. The ewes fed should be looked after and it is better for her to go a little hungry for a day or two after lambing. If fed too freely at the start there is danger of sarge. Avoid abrupt changes in the feed or feeding too much until the lambs are big enough to take all the milk the ewe produce. After that, liberal feeding will bring the lambs along in good order, but this feeding must be regular. One reason why lambs thrive so well when the ewes are on grass is that they get a regular supply of milk producing food right along. When the ewes eat at this period outside of mere sustenance for the body is converted into milk for her offspring.

Lambs when a week old should be docked, leaving not more than an inch of the stump. Ram lambs, when three weeks old should be castrated. Thousands of dollars are lost every year by farmers not attending to these two details.

A damp, moist, pile of straw does not make a good pig bed.

Milking of cows by machinery will soon be general. A girl of seven in Glasgow, recently milked 34 cows in an hour and a quarter, with the assistance of a boy to carry the milk pails away.

"I have been a subscriber to The Canadian Dairyman, and my father has been farrowing the farming World for some time. We like the arrangement of the paper very much.—John A. Rowson, Athens, Ont."