

We Welcome Practical Progressive Ideas.

Trade increases the wealth and glory of a country; but its real strength and stamina are to be looked for among the cultivators of the land.—Lord Chatham

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"Mac" from Glengary County, Replies to "Oxford"

The Pure Bred Cow, He Says, is a Good Investment, Even for the Beginner

I HAVE been greatly interested in "Oxford's" article which appeared on the front page of *Farm and Dairy* October 25th, under the heading "Shall a Beginner Start with Purebreds?" Having had a few years' experience with both grades and pure-breds, I take the liberty of making a few comments upon the article. While Oxford has brought out many good points, I think the general impression given is somewhat misleading.

"Oxford" acknowledges the extra source of revenue derived from sales of pure-bred stock for breeding purposes. In my opinion this is but one of many features in which the pure-bred excels. Now, Mr. Editor, do not imagine me to be a knocker of good and my contention, borne out in actual experience, is that for the pure-bred to displace her grade sister, she must do so on a straight economic basis. This is what she is doing in many herds all over Canada.

One of the chief reasons why it is more profitable to invest in pure-breds lies in the value of the pedigree. Not only is this so in the selling of surplus stock, but also to an even greater extent in the buying of foundation stock. Many people look upon a pedigree as a somewhat useless appendage to an otherwise inferior animal, but others know that the pedigree, with records attached, is the only sure means of knowing the producing ability of the ancestry of an animal. The Record of Merit and Record of Performance are means whereby a man may verify his opinion of a pure-bred before he buys, while the man who goes out to buy a grade cow has nothing to guide him but the word of the present owner, the appearance of the cow and the reputation of the herd. None of these tests are by any means infallible guides.

Good Grade Cows Hard to Buy.

Further, good grade cows are not so easily bought as "Oxford" seems to imagine. One cannot pick them off bushes after the manner of picking berries. The farmers who own them do not usually want to sell, and when they do the price is good and high. A buyer would not care to invest in a grade cow unless she was at the time showing every evidence of being a producer and at that time her market value would be above par, while a registered cow can be bought on the strength of her pedigree and past record even if her present condition will not warrant her selling anywhere near her real value. It is a saying among horsemen, "Buy a horse when he is this and sell him when he is fat." This is just as sound a policy in the buying of dairy cattle, particularly pure-breds. Anyone who attends the sales held throughout the country can see the truth of this statement. Many animals, of excellent breeding and productive value, just because they are in poor condition, are picked up at small cost by shrewd buyers who know their real value.

"Oxford" states that low grade pure-breds are a poor investment at any price. I quite agree, and would also place in the same list the "ordinary scrubs," which "roam the fields in summer and the barn yards in winter." If, however, the latter is his ideal of successful dairying, it is not mine. What he requires are not grades or pure-bred, but just "scrubs." They are the most profitable such conditions, and there is a decided difference between scrubs of all kinds and good cows, whether pure-breds or grades.

Those "Artificial Conditions."

On the other hand if the artificial conditions which she speaks are necessary for satisfactory milk production with pure-breds, are they not also necessary in the case of good grades,

which must of necessity have several crosses of pure-bred blood. Again, if the pure-breds have become accustomed to those artificial conditions through past generations, are they not in a better position to stand up under them than grades accustomed to "roaming the fields in summer and the barnyards in winter?" Do not grade cows taken from such conditions and placed under the aforementioned artificial conditions present a similar case to that of the North American Indians who, under natural conditions, were the healthiest race on earth, but who have fallen down completely under the artificiality of modern civilization.

Regarding the bull, if a bull of good breeding is necessary to produce proper results in a pure-bred herd is he not even more necessary to produce the same results in a grade herd. In fact, our grade cattle enthusiasts are quite strong, and rightly so, on the absolute necessity of the best pure-bred sires available. The advantage is with the pure-bred, as the extra revenue from stock sales pays the expense of the bull.

Can Beginners Afford Them?

The common fallacy that a beginner cannot afford pure-breds is an idea which features quite strongly in "Oxford's" article. I recently had occasion to look up in the herd books the ancestry of many of Canada's best cows, and was surprised to find what a large percentage of them were bred by practically unknown breeders. These animals were bought later by breeders, who recognized their possibilities as revealed in their pedigrees. They bought them in many cases at prices far below their present value. We are all aware how new families and strains are constantly springing into prominence by just such means as this. Let me state an example which has come under my own observation.

Several years ago a farmer who was short of capi-

tal wished to invest in a pure-bred female. Having some idea of pedigree he bought a young cow from a practically unknown herd, for which he paid the sum of \$50. That cow has for several years qualified in R. of P. with a considerable margin. She has had seven heifer calves. The oldest was sold when young, and is now one of the most valued animals in a prominent Ontario herd. The next in age is a very likely candidate for Canada's list of 20,000 lb. cows, while the younger ones are bidding fair to follow the same course. Can you calculate what per cent. interest that farmer is reaping and will continue to reap on investment of \$50? Would \$50 invested in a grade give such results?

In a recent issue of *Farm and Dairy* there was a photo of a pure-bred cow which was bought for \$40 and sold later on for \$600. Could such a spread as this be realized on a grade animal?

The experience of a young dairyman of western Ontario is well worth quoting here. He had always had a desire for a pure-bred herd, but the price was much above his purse. For many years he had just plodded along in straight mixed farming and a few "ordinary cows." Five years ago, his ambition forced him to make the change. In addition to several good grades, he purchased one pure-bred animal, and the following year another. Both these cows were the right foundation type, strong, large and producers. With his grades he adopted the same methods as he would with pure-breds, putting the entire herd on the R. O. P. basis. Of course, he was a born dairyman, and in the first year they averaged him 4,300 lbs. Last year, when he held his sale of grades, the herd averaged him 10,700 lbs., and naturally brought prices much higher than any other grade herd that year—one going for \$185 after producing \$150 in cream for him that season. In the meantime his pure-breds have increased to a goodly herd, and the young breeder is fully experienced now to handle them to the best of advantage. His grade herd had paid the way both in experience and cash for the introduction of the pedigreed producers.

These are not isolated cases. If space were to permit I could multiply them many times. This all goes to prove that the careful buyer, by watching his chance, can buy good pure-bred cows even if his capital is limited.

In conclusion, let me say that it has been my privilege for the past fifteen years to have fed, milked and cared for in general, a herd of good dairy cows, composed of both pure-breds and grades, intermingled in the one stable, and under quite ordinary farm conditions. During the latter ten years of this time, every milking, of every cow, both grades and pure-breds, was weighed, and occasionally tested. Given the same care and treatment in every way I have seen the pure-breds gradually outclass their grade sisters in economy of production, in both quality and quantity of milk, in general health, and freedom from the disorders common to dairy cattle. This has been my experience, it may not have been the experience of every one, but basing my opinion upon it I would advise the beginner who feels capable of handling either good grades or pure-breds to secure at least one or two good pure-breds, and if he is a careful buyer he can get them at a price which will suit his pocket. Never buy a cheap animal just because it is cheap. That is a different policy from the one I have mentioned. It is this difference that "Oxford" in his article is alluding to.



Cost of Producing 100 Pounds of Milk

INVESTIGATION made by Purdue University and the United States Department of Agriculture to determine the cost of producing milk, shows the following facts regarding the cost of production: (Average winter, six months):

	Pounds	Rate, per ton	Cost
Grain feed	41.2	\$50.00	\$1.05
Carbohydrate roughage	45.3	10.00	.25
Stover-timothy	23.5	20.00	.33
Legume roughage	15.5	8.00	.22
Mostly alfalfa	15.5	8.00	.22
Succulent roughage	15.5	8.00	.22
Bedding	21.1	8.00	.25
Total cost feed and bedding			\$2.16

LABOR REQUIRED TO PRODUCE 100 LBS. MILK.
(AVERAGE FOR ENTIRE YEAR.)

Man hours	2.4	.20	.48
Horse hours	3.1	.12	.37
Total labor cost85

OVERHEAD COST OF PRODUCING 100 LBS. MILK.
(AVERAGE FOR ENTIRE YEAR.)

Total478
Figured same as year 1915-16478
Total			\$3.140