The Farmer's Advocate and Home Magazine

"Persevere and Succeed."

Established 1866.

REGISTERED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COPYRIGHT ACT OF 1875.

Vol. XLV. LONDON, ONTARIO, JANUARY 20, 1910 No. 904

EDITORIAL.

Mr. James does well to ring the changes on the fact that votes of money to aid agriculture are not to be regarded as benefactions to the farmer, but as a means of helping to develop our fundamental industry, thereby broadening the base of the whole country's prosperity and general welfare.

Introduction of a promising new feature into one's farming practice not only increases the profit—as it unquestionably does, in many instances—but adds fresh interest to the business and to the work. Whatever tends to make us study and think, has an even greater effect on our minds than on our pocketbooks.

An Essex, Ont., contributor recently gave in "The Farmer's Advocate" a short statement of the lines of farming that are proving most profitable in that county, and a reference to the chief farm improvements being made. Let us hear similar good words from readers in other districts. Essex is not the only good pebble on the beach.

Enthusiasm, plus more thoroughgoing methods now being applied in farming operations, were just as important factors in the $15,500,000 crop-value increase of the Province of Ontario in 1909 over 1908 as the weather. In fact, such an annual increase might readily be doubled. And the Maritime and Quebec Provinces are moving in the same direction. The soil resources and conditions are all in their favor.

Our suggestion that the Department of Physics at the Ontario Agricultural College should be authorized as the regularly-constituted official referee of all drains constructed in the Province, under the Municipal Drainage and Ditches and Watercourses Acts, has been quite generally commended. Among other papers, the Free Press, of London, Ont., gives favorable editorial prominence to the suggestion, which it considers worthy of general attention.

Ten hundred and seventy silos erected in Eastern Ontario last year are reported by the Provincial Dairy Instruction staff. Whether this includes the total number erected east of Toronto, or only those built by patrons of factories and creameries, we are not advised, but even if it covers the number built by all farmers, the number is very encouraging. The propaganda must go on, however, until a farm without a silo is almost as rare as one without a barn.

The disappointingly low average of 2,700 pounds milk per cow in six months, calculated a year ago by the Chief Dairy Instructor of Eastern Ontario, on the basis of data collected from the factories, seems to have been but slightly bettered during the season of 1909, when the average per cow from May 1st to Nov. 1st has been 2,863 pounds per cow, with an average test of 3.66 per cent. Presumably, this takes no account of milk used at home, but still the production is far below what it would be if each dairyman were alive to his best interests. Strive for a 3,000-pound average in 1910! That means that "Farmer's Advocate" readers must do much better in order to pull up the average of the other fellows who are away below the mark.

Shorthorn Records of Production.

The approach of the annual meeting of the Dominion Shorthorn Breeders' Association renders timely the renewal of a suggestion made and generally commended through these columns, that steps should be taken to establish a Record of Dairy Performance of Shorthorn cows, based upon individual yearly records of regular breeding cows, the records being made under the supervision of officers of the Dominion Department of Agriculture, the same as is now being done in the case of all the breeds of special-purpose dairy stock. The time has arrived when any breed making pretensions to profitable dairy capacity must demonstrate the fact by official records of yearly production. Such a system discovers the good milking individuals, strains and herds, and tends to the development of superior milking capability in many other individuals, and generally throughout the breed. The adoption of this system of records need not prejudice the standing of the Shorthorn as a beef breed, but will widen the sphere and standing of usefulness, and will especially benefit farmers and small breeders who keep pure-bred or high-grade Shorthorns on a commercial basis. The consensus of opinion among farmers of that numerous class is that the dual-purpose attribute is the bulwark of the Shorthorn breed. And except in districts where dairying is a specialty, and cows of the special dairy breeds and their grades are kept, the general farmer prefers a class of cattle the cows of which will give a profitable amount of milk, and produce calves which, raised on skim milk, will develop into animals suitable for the export trade, or bring the highest market price as beeves for the home market at anywhere from eighteen to thirty months old, while the cow, when she ceases breeding, will flesh up rapidly, and bring a good price for beef.

The friends of some of the dairy breeds who were slow to take up the Record of Performance system, have been very much gratified with the result. Those who have studied the milk tests conducted by the Highland and Agricultural Society, in the South of Scotland, are said to have cheerfully admitted that the Ayrshire cow never had a better advertisement than this series of herd tests. Not only has it proved a good advertisement for the breed, as it has done also in Canada, but it has very materially improved the demand for bull calves, and heifers, too, out of the best milking cows. And this would certainly apply in the case of pedigree dairy Shorthorns, as is being exemplified in the case of tested herds of the breed in England, Geo. Taylor, one of the leading Old Country breeders of dairy Shorthorns, having stated that his large herd now averages over 800 gallons (or more than 8,000 pounds) of milk yearly, and that there is such a demand for bulls of this class that his supply cannot meet the demand.

There should be little difficulty in finding a considerable number of cows in Canadian herds which would qualify under the requirements of the standard adopted by the Canadian Ayrshire Breeders' Association for the Record of Performance of cows belonging to that breed. This standard requires a minimum of 8,500 pounds of milk and 306 pounds of butter-fat in a year for a mature cow (five years and over), and 5,500 pounds milk and 198 pounds butter-fat for a two-year-old heifer, the minimum required production between these ages being graded proportionately.

The record of twenty Shorthorn cows in 120 days, away from home, at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, which made an average of 4,421.6 pounds milk, 165.3 pounds butter-fat, and an average gain in weight of 105.3 pounds in 114 days, is an indication of the dairy and dual capabilities of the breed which should inspire sufficient confidence in the Shorthorn Association to adopt the Record of Performance system, and in breeders to sustain it, for the advancement of the claims of the Shorthorn as a dual-purpose breed in reality, as well as in reputation.

Corn-growing in Ontario.

Corn is the greatest of fodder plants. It has demonstrated its right to a place of supremacy in the field crops of the dairyman and the cattle-feeder. Long ago it proved its adaptability to conditions in Ontario and parts of the other Eastern Provinces of Canada. But the increase of the area devoted to corn-growing has not been anything like what the merits of the crop would warrant, nor has the work of improvement in its culture been commensurate with the results obtainable. The rapid growth in recent years of the silo system of utilizing stalk and ear in combination as fodder has given corn-growing a decided impetus, but there remains much to do in the development of varieties and strains best suited for that purpose. There is also a great field for advancement in the growth of corn for the grain itself, as Ontario feeders are now so largely dependent upon the American corn belt for their supplies. More and better and cheaper corn would be of enormous advantage in the feed lots and stables of this country. The south-western section of Ontario has proved itself peculiarly adapted to the production of corn in its highest degree of perfection as grain for feed and seed purposes.

Despite its evident outstanding merit and possibilities, corn-growing had not the advantage of any organized effort behind it like those that have helped to make the output of the corn States famous the world over, and one of the greatest of American farm money-makers. It remained for A. McKenney, the representative of the Ontario Department of Agriculture in Essex County, to take the initiative in that direction, backed by the leading growers of Essex, Kent, and adjacent counties. What is now known as the Ontario Corn-growers' Association was organized during February of last year, for the purpose of making a systematic effort to increase the yield and extend the area of corn-growing in the Province. The policy of the association has not been to promote what might be called scientific breeding of corn, but rather to advocate simple but advanced methods of selection, culture, curing, storing and listing seed corn. There are four things which members of the organization are required to do:

1.—To go into the fields and select the corn for seed before it is cut; to hang this seed corn up in a dry, airy place, where it will get thoroughly dried out.

2.—To test each ear of corn planted.

3.—To carefully grade all seed corn, and regulate the planter to drop the required number of kernels in each hill.

4.—To select thirty or forty of the best seed ears, which have shown strong vitality, and plant these all together in a special seed plot of an acre or more. From this the seed corn is obtained for next year's crop.

These methods, coupled with careful cultivation and proper drainage, are bound to increase the yield per acre. They are so simple, and require so little extra labor, that members readily take up the work. The work of the association for the past year has been mainly in getting the growers throughout the Province more enthusiastic in corn and its improvement. Several thousand copies of the report of the first convention were printed and circulated. The corn exhibition and convention at Essex were a revelation to the