

Producing Grand Champions

By J. D. McGREGOR

The production of a grand champion steer is a possibility within the reach of every progressive breeder and feeder. However, in order to gain such success at least three chief requirements are necessary, namely, the right type of breeding cattle, ability to feed cattle and an up-to-date knowledge of what constitutes a prime beef show steer.

Under the first heading—the right type of breeding cattle—much importance necessarily is attached. From bare-backed cows and high-standing, plain-fleshed bulls one can never expect to produce a grand champion steer or a load of market toppers. Instead there must be used neat, thick-fleshed, roomy cows and a bull which shows lots of meat over his back, a good smooth shoulder, well covered hooks, a heavy pair of hind quarters, deep, well-sprung ribs, and his whole body showing thickness, straight lines and uniformity, set on short legs. Like begets like, and only by breeding the best to the best can any breeder expect to produce the best. If when buying his new herd bull the breeder would put \$50 to \$100 extra into him and thereby secure a better class bull, he would go a long way towards the improvement of his whole herd. For instance, by paying \$300 for a bull instead of \$200 he is often enabled to get the best there is both in breeding and individuality. He breeds this bull to say thirty cows the first year and produces twenty-eight calves. The same applies to the second and third years. In all he has eighty-four calves, which really means that by the extra \$100 on the cost of the sire the eighty-four calves cost him about \$1.25 extra apiece. Ninety-nine times out of a hundred I would say that his calves from the better bull will sell on the open market as beef cattle for from \$5 to \$10 more than calves from a cheaper bull. Then, besides, if he retains his heifer calves he will have the satisfaction of knowing that a decided improvement is noticeable in his herd. If a man is in the pure-bred business this is particularly true, as he is selling cattle for breeding purposes and the better his cattle are he can realize a much larger price from them. I heard of a man the other day who paid over \$2,000 for a pure-bred bull to use among a large number of cows, mostly grades. I don't vouch for his wisdom in this particular case, but it will serve as an example of how much importance some breeders attach to the sire at the head of their herd.

Get Produce Uniform

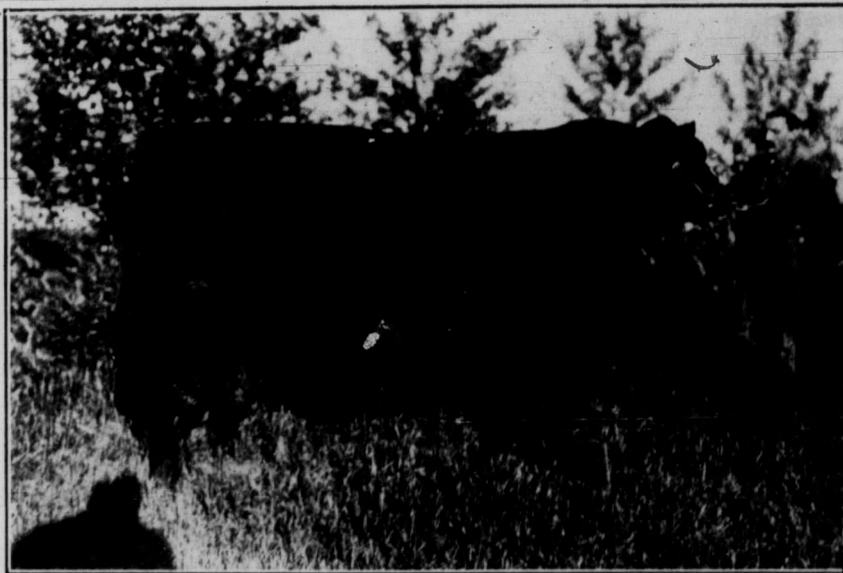
No matter what breed a man is keeping he should strive to have his produce uniform in type, color and size. In this way if he is feeding carlots of steers this uniformity often serves to add one or one and a half cents to their selling value, and when selecting steers to feed for the show he has his whole crop uniform and will be able to select two or three good prospects very much alike to start with. For instance, if a man sends a carload of fat cattle to the market, if they are, say, all solid black in color, all about the same type and weight, they invariably will be more attractive to the eye of the buyers and will realize a higher price.

When selecting breeding cattle one of course wants weight with smoothness. However, a great many men have trained their eye to judge the weight of their cattle solely on height and bone rather than sogginess and thickness. I remember the day we shipped the pure-bred Aberdeen Angus bull "Golden Gleam" up to Forrest, Man., for a short season's breeding. When he was led off the cars about ten farmers were gathered round. Several remarked that he was a small bull. The man in charge of "Golden" asked them all to guess on his weight. Guesses ranged from 1,250 to 1,600 pounds. The bull was then led

Among the prominent livestock men in Western Canada, in fact thruout America, perhaps no name is more well known than that of J. D. McGregor, of Brandon. In 1912 and again in 1913 a McGregor steer won the premier honors for the best fat steer at the Chicago International Livestock Show. Such a performance is a phenomenal one, and could only be accomplished by a breeder who is an expert. In this article Mr. McGregor describes just what requirements are necessary to produce high-class livestock. It is not to be expected that every breeder of livestock can fit and show an International winner, but every farmer can benefit materially by knowing the proper methods to follow in producing champions. Again it should be remembered that there is always a ready sale for choice cattle, no matter how draggy the market is for the other grades, and in view of the fact that all signs point to cattle prices being exceptionally high for some time to come, greater attention than ever is being given to livestock, and incidentally mixed farming, in this western country. Hence this article should be particularly appropriate at this time.

over to the elevator scales and tipped them in ordinary breeding condition at 1,965. These farmers were greatly surprised, but will maybe know the next time that because a bull is extremely low set it does not necessarily follow that he is light in weight. It was on this trip that "Golden Gleam" sired "Glencarnock Victor 2nd," grand

with his feeds to make a success of cattle. On thin cattle gains will come pretty easily, but as the steer fattens he becomes more particular with his likes and dislikes, and a man must be very careful or he will put him off his feed. This would mean practically a week's loss of gains anyway, which would be serious. Then, as the steer



"Evrieux of Harviestown" (Imp.) Show bull of the McGregor herd this year.

champion steer at the Chicago International, 1913.

Feeding Cattle Correctly

The second heading, the ability to feed cattle correctly, is very important to any breeder or feeder of champion cattle. I have learned purely by experience that a feeder must be intensely interested in his work and regular

reaches the high stages of fattening one must see that he keeps smooth in flesh and pliable in skin. This can often be done by supplying fresh green succulent feeds, such as turnips, green corn, green alfalfa hay or boiled barley. To keep up a steer's appetite always feed good fresh-smelling grains, keep the mangers clean and fresh and never let the grain lay in front of the

steers in their mangers. Always practice cleaning out whatever is left in their mangers after every feed. In this way no feed is allowed to sour and a steer is taught to expect feed at a certain time, he gets hungry for it, and will eat more this way than if allowed to nibble every time he feels like it. He is also less apt to get off his feed. However, this does not apply to young calf feeding, when it is often advisable to have feed before them at all times. A man raising market topping, prize winning cattle usually keeps his young stock fat from calves up. It is true, I believe, that a man can put cheaper gains on calves than cattle of an older age. It is also true that once a calf is allowed to lose his fat and flesh he will never be as thick fleshed again nor ever have as great an early age weight as he would have had if kept thrifty and fat right from weaning time thru. To raise champions one must feed plentifully from calfhood on, not allowing his steers to be thin at any time in their life.

Balance the Ration

Science can be applied to feeding as well as breeding. For instance, when feeding alfalfa hay as the roughage one needs less bran and oil cake with his barley or oats to balance up his ration. He should try and figure how he can get the most economical and speedy gains. Invariably he will find that only by balancing his ration can he get the best results. Barley is a better fattening feed than oats, because it contains more carbohydrates or fats. Oats are better feed for young growing stock, because they contain more bone building ash and more crude protein. Hence when feeding cattle to get them fat for market it pays to use barley with its high percentage of carbohydrates. However, to get the very best results by bringing out their full value they should be balanced up with a feed high in protein. Alfalfa or clover hay and oil cake are ideal for this. They not only increase the feeding value of the barley but keep the animals more healthy, thus they shorten the feeding period and give a higher finish than is possible with barley alone, no matter how it is fed. A daily ration to use as an example could be given as:

Linseed meal or oil cake, 3.0 pounds.
Barley, 10.0 pounds.
Oats, 7.0 pounds.
Clover or alfalfa, 4.0 pounds.
Silage, 15.0 pounds.

This ration could not be used exactly and in many cases could not even be used as a basis to work on, as a feeder often must use just what feeds he has on the farm. However, I do believe that it would decidedly pay him in the end to buy oil cake if the price is at all reasonable. Oil cake at \$30 a ton would be reasonable enough under ordinary circumstances. People often ask what is the right age to feed cattle off. I would say that at two years of age cattle should be fat and off to market, and often younger than that if a man is raising his own feeders. It is hard to say just whether a man should tie his steers up or feed them in open yards and sheds. For myself I would by all means feed in open yards and sheds. I believe the steers will feed better and will be less trouble and expense. They are less apt to get off their feed with yard feeding and when shipping time comes will go to market with at least a quarter as much shrinkage—which means a lot when a man is selling 8½ cent cattle. Of course this applies to fitting steers by the carlot. However, if only fitting single steers I believe it is always preferable to have them in a loose box with a green paddock for them to run in every evening during the summer. Single steers to win must be very fat. This stage of perfection is reached most



Barns on Glencarnock Stock Farm

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