



# FARM AND DAIRY & RURAL HOME



We Welcome Practical Progressive Ideals

The Recognized Exponent of Dairying in Canada

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

VOL. XXXVI

TORONTO, ONT., JANUARY 25, 1917

No. 4

## Increasing Dairy Profits by Lowering Production Costs\*

### How Labor, the Biggest Factor in Production, is Saved by Keeping Better Cows, Using the Milking Machine and Growing Spring Pastures

**T**HE rise in the price of dairy products has not more than kept pace with the increased cost of production, even under prevailing abnormal market conditions, and dairying is not as profitable as it might be. When a business reaches the point where it is not profitable, there are two ways of getting it back on a paying basis. In some lines of business the course followed is to increase the price to the consumer, but dairy farmers, because the price they receive is beyond their control, being set on the open market, can increase their profits only by cutting down the cost of production. Both the lowering of production costs and the increase of output depends largely on the way labor is utilized, for it is now scarce and dear, and is one of the controlling factors in dairy production. Dairying requires a lot of labor, and dairymen are hard hit by this scarcity. They are not blaming anyone, for they realize that there is work to be done in Europe as well as on the dairy farms of Canada. We must do the best we can with the labor we have, and on the way we utilize it depends the quantity of our output and the net returns from it. The lowering of the cost of production resolves itself therefore into the question of utilizing labor to good advantage.

#### Better Cows—Milking Machines.

How, then, are we to cut the cost of production in the dairy business? The most crying need is for better cows, for the poor cow is a labor waster. There is no doubt but that many of our herds could be improved from 30 to 70 per cent. in production. Another way of saving labor is to utilize the milking machine. It directly concerns the labor question, and is now a successful machine. It is not successful in the hands of every dairymen, but has proven practical in the hands of experimenters and many practical farmers. Success depends altogether on the ability of the man who handles it. It is not fool proof. It requires more brains to operate than a harrow or a stone boat, and the man who operates it, or one of his family, must be somewhat of a mechanic. During the last three years it has been successful in the hands of the majority of those using it. It will get nearly as much milk, and get it cheaper. It should not be forgotten, however, that without proper care it is the dirtiest machine on the place. It is not as clean as the cleanest-hand milker, but is cleaner than the average milker available. It now has a place as one of the labor saving machines for the dairy farmer.

#### The Problem of Summer Feeding.

The greatest factor in cutting down the cost of production of milk is the organization of farm

PROF. A. LEITCH, Farm Manager, O. A. College, Guelph.

labor and acreage to cut down the cost of production of the food of the cow. The most serious time for feed from the financial standpoint is not in the winter, because most of our dairy produce is turned out in the summer. Nor is it in the spring, when nature supplies abundance of rich, nutritious grasses and clovers. It is in the

summer from about July 10 to about September 15th when heat, flies and drought combine to give the cow a hard time. Not only is this summer feed shortage serious because of the reduction of the summer milk production, but also because that if a cow's yield once comes down it is impossible to bring her back to normal production, and her yield remains lower throughout the balance of her lactation period. When, late in September, the aftergrass comes on, the farmer does not get proper returns from it, and has to wait until the cow has her next calf before she gets back to full capacity.

But if we are to prevent cows from drying up at this time it must be remembered that the labor used is high priced, and that if too much of it is utilized, it will cut into our profits. At the College and on other farms where accounts have been kept, it has been found that in the production of clover hay at \$10 a ton a man in the field at haying time is worth from 64 to 74 cents an hour. With some of the other crops, the cost is not so much, but it is still high. Harvesting oats is worth 24 to 28 cents an hour; harvesting barley and wheat about 30 cents, and working with mangos from 30 to 35 cents an hour. There is no time of the year when you have to be so careful about the amount of labor you put on the cows.

#### Methods of Summer Feeding.

Several methods of summer feeding as a supplement to poor pasture have been tried. The first I will mention is soiling, or the feeding of green crops, which are acceptable to the cows, such as peas and oats, millet or sorghum. These are cut and hauled for feeding. They are good for keeping up the milk flow, but require altogether too much labor. Another way to tide over the summer shortage of feed is to put in five or ten acres more of corn than is sufficient for winter feeding, and carry it over for use as summer silage. Both these methods are good, but there is a better and cheaper way. They use a lot of labor, worth from 30 to 75 cents an hour, which can be more profitably employed on other crops. No feed can compare with the young green growth of grass or cereal crops for milking purposes. We cannot prevent pastures from drying up, but we can provide pasture equally good by growing what has come to be known as spring pasture.

#### Spring Pasture Mixtures.

One spring pasture mixture that has given good results is composed of one and one-half bushels of oats; 30 lbs. Early Amber sugar cane, and six or seven lbs. of red clover, sown at the time when spring crops are put in. This is ready by the latter part of June, when the oats are six or seven



#### War and Live Stock

**I**N 1913, Germany had 24,000,000 cattle. At the outset of the war, with her marvellous industrial and agricultural efficiency, she set aside 8,000,000 head for breeding purposes. This left 16,000,000 head for feeding her people—soldiers and civilians. Into this reserve flowed the offspring of the 8,000,000 head preserved for breeding purposes and from it stocks were taken as required. This reserve is now down to 4,900,000 in spite of being constantly replenished. At the present rate of destruction, in one and a half years, Germany will be down to her last cow. The reduction of stock is also having the effect of reducing the fertility of the land and making it harder to feed her people properly. For the next three or four years after the war, she will have to use all her cattle for the purpose of building up her breeding stock.

When the war is over and men return to the land, there will in all likelihood be a large production of cereals and a fall in prices, but for years owing to the depletion of the cattle stocks of the world, there must be high prices for dairy products. They may never again reach the low levels that we have seen. It behooves us, therefore, to hold our cows, even if in poor condition. Though with high prices for feed many may lose money in keeping up their stock, it will pay to do so, for we must have enough cattle for breeding purposes to help restore the live stock of the world after the war.

\*A report of an address delivered at the recent Dairymen's Conventions.