Letters to the Editor

Mr. Archibald's Figures

EDITOR, Farm and Dairy.—I notice in the Farm and Dairy of June 20th under "Letters to the Editor," one from J. A. M., Kings Co., Prince Edward Island, criticising certain estimates made by Mr. E. S. Archibald, Dominion Animal Husbandman as to the cost of keeping a cow for a year and the value of her products. Briefly, J.A.M. severely criticises Mr. Archibald for valuing the manure from one cow for a year at $22.50 chemical value and another $22.50 for humus value. He also thinks that the estimates for feed of $52.21 for a cow producing 5,727 lbs of milk is ridiculously low. I do not wish to get into any controversy with J.A.M, but as a personal friend of Mr. Archibald, and in justice to the live stock industry and the Experimental Farm system, I believe that the impression left by J.A. M.'s letter in the minds of Farm and Dairy readers, should be corrected.

The Value of Manure.

As to the value of manure, the Prince Edward Island farmer evidently is at variance with our very best farmers the world over. That the whole industry of agriculture depends on soil fertility and that the manure from live stock is the surest and safest method of maintaining or increasing soil fertility, is an understood and proven fact throughout all Europe and America. Undoubtedly the value of cow manure depends largely on quality of feed given the cows, and age of cattle and even more on the care given to the manure in order to prevent seepage, bleaching, burning, etc. We all agree with this party that much manure from cows "is not worth a sou," due to improper handling. Any farmer is in reality exchanging his manure for cow feed if it is properly applied to the soil. Milkmen near the cities who are not working farms naturally would place no value on manure, but any man operating a farm should consider its value more carefully.

As to the chemical value of manure: If cow manure, both liquid and solid, contains 1.4 per cent of nitrogen; .2 per cent phosphoric acid; and 1.45 per cent. potash, as stated by our best authorities, even on a basis of pre-war prices for any good commercial fertilizer where nitrogen cost at least 16c per pound and phosphoric acid and potash at least 5c per pound, the chemical value of a ton of manure as voided based on prices of commercial fertilizer would be $5.85. The fact that prices for commercial fertilizers have increased from 25 to 200 per cent. since 1914, and that the supply is exceedingly limited, and in fact potash is almost impossible to obtain, should enhance the value of manure. No farmer can, with commercial fertilizer alone maintain or increase soil fertility but he must have the humus either of decaying manure or of decaying green crops such as clover plowed under. This fact has been clearly established by the practice of our most successful farmers as well as by careful experiments on Experimental Farms throughout the world.

As to the value of grade calves, this is perhaps an open question. However, Holstein and Ayrshire calves sell readily at from $3 to $7 throughout Ontario and Quebec. What the local price of these calves at birth may be in Prince Edward Island is questionable.

As to Feed Cost.

The figure given for the feeding of the average cow giving about 5,700 pounds of milk was actually $52.21 at the time that the circular was written. Even though J.A.H. has at hand a copy of circular No. 21, dated 1916, when last re-printed, he must make due allowance for increase in cost of feeds from that time to this. Even so, 1916 and 1917 figures collected by census taken by cow testing authorities in Ontario and Quebec and made up by the Dairy and Cold Storage Branch as well as by other authorities, do not exceed this sum more than 10 to 20 per cent. The past winter has seen higher feed prices than ever before in the country's history and any open minded farmer will surely realize that old commercial prices, of feeds two or three years ago, must be added to to meet present market prices. However, I notice that at the present time J.A.H. is feeding nine pounds of mixed meal, which is a liberal ration for a cow unless producing over 35 pounds of four per cent milk daily. That this meal is costing him at the rate of $70 a ton is evidence of lack of careful cooperative buying. Had he laid in his stock of meal in car-load lots purchased cooperatively with his neighbors and obtained in the fall of 1917, the very best mixture of mill feeds should not have cost him more than $45 a ton at prices then existing. Even so with present prices of bran, shorts, oil cake, cottonseed, where obtainable, distiller's grains, and the like, I fail to see how any mixture of these feeds could cost him $70 per ton unless he purchased in very small quantities, paid freight rates on less than car lots, and kindly granted one or more dealers excessive profits.

This Prince Edward Island farmer, undoubtedly a wide awake man, fails to appreciate the real purpose of the Experimental Farms or their circulars. It was the intention of these circulars and, I believe, an apparent one to careful readers, to show that one must value all by-products and care for all by-products most assiduously in order to show any profit from dairy cows. Experimental Farms have the greatest sympathy for the hard working dairy farmer who is undoubtedly working on a small margin of profit if in fact any profit whatever is forthcoming.—F. G. S., Ottawa, Ont.

The Feeder's Side of It

EDITOR, Farm and Dairy.—I like to read Farm and Dairy, especially subjects relating to the silo and silage, care and feeding of cattle, etc., but I noticed an article in the July 4th issue, headed "Ignorance or Carelessness," which strikes me very hard. I think you worded that article very strongly, as the pigs were put outside from comfortable quarters, where they contracted the disease. As an experiment, I did the same thing last year. The hogs that were put outside thrived splendidly, while the remainder of the litter died in inside quarters.

I also disagree very strongly with Mr. Hall, of the Veterinary Director General's Department, who, according to the article mentioned, claims that shoat-pneumonia affects the pigs when they are from six weeks to three months of age. I had two die when they were ready for market. They had been kept as white as snow, as the pen was cleaned every day, and well bedded. It was also dry, light, roomy and comfortable. As to loss, I lost about twenty-five last fall, and I considered it the most profitable loss I have ever experienced. I would have lost more than their value had I tried to winter them on warm water and mill feeds such as we got; and at times we could not get any. The pigs which I lost caught the disease. I believe, from an old unsanitary pen which I have since torn down.

As far as comfortable quarters and raising hogs are concerned, I do not think a man who markets between 60 and 75 hogs in a year and rears about 100, need go to either Mr. Hall or Mr. Bradt for information. The little pig on which they held the post mortem was badly infected before being put outside. Of course we all know that these fellows with soft jobs have to make out they are alive occasionally or they would lose their positions, but with the experience which I

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