

Judging Farms in a Prize Farm Competition

SOME of our readers have asked us how the judges in the dairy farms' competition that was conducted so successfully last year by The Canadian Dairyman and Farming World, among the farmers living within a radius of 30 miles of Toronto, judged the farms. One of the judges, Mr. D. Drummond, of the Department of Agriculture, Ottawa, spoke on this point at the meeting held recently at Thornhill, the day the prizes were presented.

"I would like to point out," said Mr. Drummond, that the competition was for the best dairy farm. This meant that the farms had to be judged from a dairy standpoint. Several of the farms would have stood much higher in the list than they did had it not been for this fact. They were excellent farms but not what we could recognize as dairy farms.

"It is very unsatisfactory," said Mr. Drummond, "attempting to judge farms by a score

tion that will reach almost all parts of his farm, to insure the maintenance of its fertility. Those who studied the score card published recently in The Canadian Dairyman and Farming World will see that the judges in the recent competition placed considerable weight on this question of crop rotation.

"In connection with this matter of system on the farm, comes the point of economy in labor. The fences should be so arranged that the fields can be worked with the least possible expenditure of labor. The buildings, also, should be so constructed that the work performed in them may be done expeditiously, thus saving time. This matter of the saving of time is as important to the up-to-date farmer as it is to the business man in the city.

JUDGING THE LIVE STOCK

"Under the heading of 'live stock,' we grouped our points in the recent competition according to the number that were kept, their breeding and their condition. We expected the stock

"In judging the crops raised on the farms, we laid emphasis upon their suitability for dairy purposes. We also paid close attention to the question of weeds and in this connection watched the fence corners and roadways on the farms.

BUILDING REQUIREMENTS

"When inspecting the buildings, we expected to find them large enough but not too large for the purposes of the farm, well lighted, well ventilated, and well arranged. Some men who had new buildings may be disappointed that they did not get more points. In the case of such buildings, however, we expected more than we did where the buildings were old as it is a difficult matter to improve old buildings. When a man is erecting a new building, he should put in modern improvements. Therefore, when we found new buildings lacking modern improvements, they were scored more severely than they otherwise would have been. We did not lay so much emphasis on the size of the building as we did upon its convenience and its suitability to the requirements of the farm.

CLEAN YARDS REQUIRED

"If there is one thing about a dairy farm that should be emphasized it is the importance of having clean yards. A cow should not have to wade through dirty yards to be milked in the stable. A number of the competitors were weak on this point. Proper care of milk is rapidly growing in importance. Ice is the best means of preserving milk. Then also, the milk should be kept in a place removed from the stable so that it shall be away from all bad odors. One competitor had an excellent milk house but the building immediately adjoined his stable, and thus it lost points.

"Another most important matter, is that of neatness everywhere about the farm. Little things show how the wind blows. Old implements lying around in heaps of rubbish do not show good management, and they are a collecting ground for weeds. A man who is not neat in his farm operations is likely to be careless about other matters.

"In such a progressive centre as York county, which surrounds the leading city of Ontario, we expected that nearly every competitor would have some system of book-keeping by which he could show us how he was succeeding in his farm operations. We were surprised to find that a number of the competitors did not have any system of keeping track of their farm accounts."

JUDGING THE FARM HOMES

In answer to a question as to how they judged the farm homes, Mr. Drummond replied, "A farm is not necessarily entitled to a prize simply because it has a large house and large barn. The house and the barn should be in proportion to the size and needs of the farm and of the farmer's family. A farm on which the house and barns are out of proportion to the size of the farm is likely to be more injured than benefited by such buildings.

"In judging the houses, we did not look so much for large houses as we did for modern conveniences such as baths, water closets, dumb waiters, closets (which all women want in their houses), and good sanitary conveniences. Where we found these conveniences, we considered them more worthy of credit than large buildings without such conveniences. A small house in which only two or three people live, that is conveniently arranged, is all that is required and should not lose points simply because it is not as large and costly as another house on a larger farm where more people live. Then also, we expected to find nice approaches and good gardens. I was sorry that we did not see more good gardens than we did although there were some very good ones."



INSPECTING A PRIZE DAIRY FARM IN YORK COUNTY, ONT.

The day the prizes were presented in the Dairy Farms' Competition conducted last year by The Canadian Dairyman and Farming World, in the vicinity of Toronto, a general invitation was extended to all who wished to visit the first prize farm at Thornhill, of Mr. Geo. McKenna. The illustration shows a group standing in the doorway of Mr. McKenna's large barn. The third gentleman from the left is Mr. D. Drummond, of the Dominion Department of Agriculture, Ottawa, one of the judges in the competition, the fourth from the left is Mr. D. J. McClure, of Chureville, the third prize winner; the fifth from the left is Mr. Alex. McCowan, M.L.A., and the sixth, Mr. John R. Dargavel, M.L.A., the president of the Eastern Ontario Dairyman's Association. The gentleman, whose bare head can be seen in the background is Mr. A. J. Reynolds, the well-known but modest secretary of the Toronto Milk Producers' Association.

card. When it has been found impossible to judge live stock satisfactorily by a score card it will be realized how difficult it is to judge a farm on that basis. The fact is no scale of points can be followed too closely. It is useful only to give some idea of the main points that influenced the judges in the making of their decisions. There frequently are points that cannot be shown in a scale of points.

MUST HAVE AN IDEAL

"In judging a farm it is necessary that the judges themselves shall have an ideal in their minds and that they shall judge the various farms according to that ideal. It is necessary, also, that the competitors shall show that they have ideals and that they are trying to improve their farms in a systematic manner so as to make them as much like their ideals as possible.

"When the judges inspect a farm the first thing they want to know is what system of farming the owner is following. It is not necessary that these systems shall be the same, as a system that is suitable for one section may not be applicable to others. It is necessary, however, that the competitor shall have some system of crop rota-

tion kept to be in proportion to the size of the farm. In some cases, competitors had large herds but they also had large farms. Judged on the basis of the size of their farm, the number of the animals they kept was not so large proportionately as in the case of other competitors who kept a smaller number of cattle. We thought that a man should have two cows for every four acres, and a proportionate number of hogs.

"The question of quality and breeding is very important. Some of the competitors, in the recent competition, were in the habit of buying their milkers each year and of selling them when they were through milking them. These men, possibly, were disappointed that they did not get more points for breeding. Such men, however, are not doing anything to improve the stock of the country. They have to buy their stock from some one else. If they want better stock, they have to depend upon some other man, who is breeding stock, for improvement. The man, therefore, who is consistently endeavoring to improve his herd by breeding his own stock deserves more credit than the man who buys his stock from others.