

Stock-judging Competitions.

Some men are born judges of live stock, others become proficient at the art by careful study of animal type and conformation, while a few have the honor thrust upon them. No man becomes an expert judge in a day, nor in a season, in fact some never do. The man who has always lived amongst live stock, has fed and fitted them for the show-ring and has watched the judge place the ribbons year after year, naturally acquires good judgment. He at least knows what to look for in his particular breed from a feeder's and show-ring standpoint. He breeds to intensify the desirable qualifications, consequently his eye is trained to detect strong and weak points in animals before him and to balance up these points in order to determine which animal comes nearest his ideal. Judging is a matter of comparison. The eye must be trained to see and the mind to act. Many young men have not the opportunity of following the show-ring, but, by adapting themselves they may become adept judges. Hundreds of judges are required each fall to make the awards at the various exhibitions and the present experts cannot always officiate. Young men must gradually be called upon to fill the positions. Will they qualify for the task?

All young men are not interested in live stock, but there are judges required in many other departments. Grain, vegetables and fruit require to be placed and it takes equally efficient men to make the awards as it does with live stock. The country needs capable, unprejudiced, men who can make just awards and thus aid in keeping the shows of educational value. "Fit yourself for a position and the position will find you," is a saying that every young man should have in mind. It is the man who applies himself that reaches the highest rung of the ladder. Now is the time to commence studying type and practicing sizing up animals, grain, fruits and vegetables. Seize every opportunity to gain a knowledge of judging, as the time may come when you will be called upon to assist in judging at some fair. If there is a competition at your local fair this fall, be sure to enter it for the practice and information it is possible for you to receive. Plan to spend part of your time at the fair watching the judge make the awards. Place the animals in your own mind and compare your judgment with the expert's.

While students of agricultural colleges have always received training in stock judging and have entered competitions, it is only during recent years that the young men on the farms, unable to attend college, have realized that they can learn considerable about judging at home, by close observation and by watching the awards being placed at the fairs. However, it is practice that makes perfect and gives confidence. It is only recently that competitions have been arranged at the local fairs. In many counties in Ontario there are several stock-judging competitions held every fall. These are generally looked after by the District Representative, but, if he is unable to assist many of the regular judges are willing to do all in their power to assist the young men. They choose the stock from among the entries at the fair, and after the class has judged the animals and given their reasons for the placings the man in charge gives his placings and reasons. As a rule a lively discussion follows, as all cannot see alike. Some lay more stress on one point than on another. The difficult task is to balance points and give consistent reasons. The agricultural society or some enterprising man in the community usually awards either cash or book prizes to the three or four young men making the highest score. This is an incentive to young men to enter the competition. Sixty per cent. may be allowed for placings and 40 per cent. for reasons. Even if no prizes were awarded young men should be keen to enter in a competition that tends toward self improvement. But this is not always the case, with good prizes to work for it is sometimes difficult to secure a dozen young men to take part. Many appear to be afraid they will make glaring mistakes. They forget that it is through having mistakes pointed out that they become able to avoid them the next time. There is another class of men who enter for the money that is in it, instead of any educational benefit they may derive. At a competition held by one of Western Ontario's agricultural societies the sum of ten dollars was divided in 4 prizes. Only five men competed but as soon as the awards were made one who received a prize exclaimed, two dollars more to take home to-night. Two of the others who saw where they made mistakes in placing enquired of the expert in charge, where they might improve on their method of given reasons, balancing points etc. Needless to say the latter two got more than two dollars' value out of the competition. This illustration is mentioned merely to show the importance of entering competitions for the information to be gained rather than for the paltry dollars. Money is all right in its place, but there are things equally important. Every young man who has the opportunity should take part in judging competitions this fall. Go in to win but don't let the prize be the only inducement.

Pointers for Competitors.

The class to be judged is usually picked by the committee in charge and no competitor is aware of the animals chosen until they are brought into the ring. Eighteen or twenty minutes is usually given for placing the animals and writing the reasons. The cards are collected before the expert gives his placings and reasons. The older men are as interested in the competition

as the competitors. They crowd around and voice their sentiments in loud whispers. Some prefer one animal some another, and maybe these men are close enough for you to hear them talking. Their choice may not correspond with yours and you take a second look. Maybe you change your placings, but find difficulty in writing reasons for doing so. You are in trouble and likely to get excited. You cannot put on paper what you want to, and before you are half through time is up. All this comes from having open ears for some one else's opinion. Make up your mind which animal should go first and which second, then proceed to write the reasons for such placings. If you are satisfied in your own mind that you are right, the reasons will come easy. If not, you will have all kinds of trouble making reasons to justify your placings. Pay no attention to what onlookers are saying, they are as likely as you are to be wrong. Never crib from the other competitors. The man who goes around trying to see how other fellows place the animals lacks backbone, is not fair to himself, and it is doubtful if he will ever make a judge. Every man has a mind of his own and should use it. Competitions are a good thing to cultivate decision and sound judgment; both of these qualities are required in a good judge. You may not place the animals according to the official's judgment, but, have the courage of your convictions and hold to your placings until shown your are wrong. See the points of difference before acknowledging them.

Sizing up an Animal.

The first impression is usually the nearest correct. If possible get a good look at the animals as they enter the ring and note the general appearance and style. Breed type and conformation must be considered and it is advisable to be consistent in your placings, that is, follow the same type and size of animal from the first prize down. A small animal placed between two larger ones looks bad and must have special qualifications to justify such placings. Likewise a large animal between two smaller ones looks out of place. If a rangy draft horse is first, follow that type rather than put a blocky one second and a rangy horse in third. Very often a certain animal is good, but, owing to its type or size it must either be placed first or last; these things must be decided by yourself and done quickly as there are many points to consider. A score card is valuable in determining the value to place on various parts of the animal, but it should never be used in the show-ring. There is no time to score an animal. The outstanding features of each should be fixed in the mind and balanced one against the other in eight or ten minutes, if there are not more than four in the class. In the show-ring where there are 10 or 15 animals the judge resorts to a process of elimination, thus narrowing the class down to 5 or 6 for the first honors.

Have system in your work. Start at one end of the animal and work towards the other, noticing the points as you go along. In this way there is less danger of overlooking any part. Some start at the head and work back, while others judges commence at the rear. In every class of stock there are several outstanding features that should be taken into consideration. When it comes to a close decision, comparison of fine points decides the placings, with horses general appearance and style are first noticed. Feet, legs and pasterns, quality of bone and feathering are of great importance. An oblique shoulder, strong back and loin with the body well ribbed up, are looked for in the heavy draft horse. Have an eye for blemishes on feet and legs. Seldom are unsound horses brought to the fairs, but the judge should be familiar with all defects that might appear on a horse. Don't decide on the winner before you have seen the horses move. Action must be taken into consideration.

When judging beef cattle compare the general appearance of the animals, the top and under line. depth and thickness of body, thickness of loin, filling of the quarters, covering of flesh, strength of bone, and quality of hair and skin. The character of the animal is indicated by the head.

The conformation of dairy cattle is different from the beef animal. Instead of a blocky form more of a wedge-shaped animal is wanted. Strong constitution and great capacity are desired. Indications of milk production are very important. When comparing two dairy animals, look at their heads, noticing the size of muzzle and brightness of eye. See which cow has the longest milk veins, the largest udder with well placed teats, the most pliable skin and softest hair.

Sheep have their bodies well covered with wool, and after getting the general type and conformation of the animal, the hand must be used to determine strength of back, spring of rib, thickness of loin and leg of mutton. The eye alone is depended upon in judging hogs. Smooth shoulders, strong back, well sprung ribs and good hams are required. The lard type is thicker and heavier than the bacon type. Strength of bone and pastern should also be considered. There are many fine points not mentioned in each class that might be taken into consideration in comparing several animals. Breed type is very important. If an animal is off type or is not the proper color it should be discarded.

Giving Reasons.

Bear in mind that few animals are deficient in all parts. The poorest animal in the show-ring likely has some strong point and that should be mentioned in giving reasons. Avoid lengthy reasons, the official in charge of a competition does not care to read a lengthy manuscript. Mention the out-

standing features and don't guess about anything. Be sure you know what you are talking about; if in doubt about anything leave it out. Short, concise, systematic reasons are wanted. Make the reasons read smoothly, merely enumerating the points wherein No. 1 excels No. 2 is not enough. It takes practice to give good reasons. Many men can pick out the best animal in a herd, but if asked to state why it is the best they cannot tell in so many words, although they know why. We have all seen judges at local fairs place stock, and spectators could see no logical reason for such placings. A few words by the judge would enlighten the onlookers. The competitions are educating the rising generation to not only use good judgment in judging, but also to be able to tell why one animal should be placed above another. Every young farmer should enter the competitions and do his best.

FARM BULLETIN.

An Interesting Book.

BY PETER MCARTHUR.

For the past couple of hours I have enjoyed myself hugely reading Clarus Ager's book, "The Farmer and the Interests, A Study in Parasitism." It is a compact, well-written, little book that reviews the condition of the prairie farmer, and for that matter, all farmers, with keen insight and effective comment. The author differs from most writers on this old and universal problem, inasmuch as he does not waste any energy in railing at the parasites. He explains the doings of bankers, manufacturers financiers, politicians, etc., and doesn't blame them a bit for robbing the farmers. He expects them to rob, because "it is their nature so to do." But the way he talks about farmers is positively scandalous. He not only calls them "fools," but makes the matter a hundred times worse by proving clearly that they are fools—proving it beyond the peradventure of a doubt. If the farmers ever read his book he'll not be able to get himself elected even for pound-keeper. The whole purpose of this vigorous little volume is to hold the farmer's nose right down to the facts, and make him see just how many kinds of a fool he is. It is my misfortune that I do not know Mr. Ager, but if he employs a clipping bureau, and it should forward to him this article, I want him to understand that I enjoyed every minute I spent with his book. There is something in our weak, human nature that makes us like to see another man bumping a nice new head against the same stone wall that we have battered our own time-worn, Neanderthal skull against. Mr. Ager may rest assured that when he gets through with pounding the Bankers' Association, and the Big Interests he will be like the man who was kicked by a mule—he'll not be as pretty as he was but he'll know more!

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The trouble with Mr. Ager, as with everyone else who tries to take a fall out of the powers that prey, is that he considers politics a part of the science of government. It is nothing of the kind. Politics is part of the science of psychology, and those who succeed in it are not those who understand the facts and statistics of government, but those who understand the workings of the human mind. Politics, as we have it, is really a survival of the tribal instinct which made people stick to their chief whether right or wrong. It is a matter of the emotions rather than of reason and if I wanted to do something that would have political effect I wouldn't write a thoughtful and well-considered work on economics. On the contrary I would pull a quill from Mother Goose and try to get the children singing some such little rhyme as this:

Ride a cock-horse
Like the duffer you are,
To see a Big Banker
Get in his Big Car.
With rings on his fingers,
And red on his nose,
He shall make money
Wherever he goes!

Perhaps if the children learned irreverent things like that instead of soaking in the envious and respectful talk of their papents about members of parliament and successful business men, they might grow up into a race of voters who would carry through the reforms that Mr. Ager so eagerly advocates.

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I am entirely convinced that political success depends less on logic than on human sympathy. The farmer is not to be blamed such an awful lot for allowing himself to be led by the nose, because the politician is about the only person who comes around and compliments him on what a fine nose he has. All year through the farmer moils and toils and quarrels with his neighbors, and finds life dreary and humdrum. Then along before election time the Member of Parliament or his rival candidate comes around looking like a burst of sunshine from behind a cloud, and gives the farmer one of those hand-shakes that ends with a sympathetic squeeze just as he is letting go his fingers. He asks him about his health, and tells him how well the children look, and calls him by his first name and perhaps slaps him on the back genially—oh, I needn't go on with it. You all know what it's like. Then he will ask about the sick cow, and tell what his uncle, who used to live on a farm, gave