

The Preparation of Dairy Cattle for the Showring.

BY F. S. PIER, MOUNT MORRIS, N. Y.
(Continued from page 258.)

Now that I have told you what I consider the principal things to do, I will tell you a few things that you should not do, which is, perhaps, the most important of the two.

First.—Don't wait until a few days before the show to begin fitting. Four or six weeks is little time enough; two months is better, and if your cows are always about fit so much the better.

Second.—Don't hurry: you are most sure to overdo the matter and have your stock reach their bloom before you start for the fairs, which should by all means be avoided.

Third.—Whatever you do, DON'T feed heavily of solid grain at any time; let moderation in grain feeding be the rule,—for that reason begin early. An animal that is forced is easily upset, and then you have undone more in a day, perhaps, than you can recover in a week. Begin early, and go slow.

Fourth.—Don't feed corn (maize) in any form. It is very heating to the blood, makes grease instead of bone and muscle, and on the first extra exertion of your cow (like carrying her to the fair) she will wilt like cut grass drying in the sun. Of course we are talking about dairy cattle. I do not pretend to know much about fitting beefers for show, but my experience with corn meal would lead me to say that it is poor stuff to feed to anything, even a hog. I have had experience—and of the sorrowful kind—with it on cattle and sheep, hogs ditto.

Fifth.—Don't try to feed a dairy cow to a point where she shows she is getting more feed than she can take care of and convert it into milk, or the judge will say she is no good as a profitable dairy cow and send her to the rubbish pile, when, if you had fed less, and at the same time fed more, you might have won a prize. You know a judge has no business to say he thinks the cow has simply been overfed, and if she had been properly fed, etc. No, he must take them as he finds them in the ring that day; no ifs or and's about it. A really good dairy cow carrying a lot of meat which you have ignorantly put on to fit her, as you think, gets sent to the stable without a show. Some old cow whose ribs you can see as far as you can see the cow (without any fitting) walks off with the ribbon, and you know you have the best cow for milk, and you naturally think the judge has made a mistake. Perhaps in reality he has, but it is your own fault; you have deceived him by bringing a beefy cow into the ring that is not so naturally, and you must take the consequences.

There never was a more mistaken notion than getting dairy animals fat, or even in high condition, for the showing; it has lost to the owners no end of prizes, unless the society happens to get a beef breeder to judge them.

Sixth.—Don't wait until you get on the car to go to the fair to begin polishing horns and hoofs, or begin the use of the brush; do these things at home in your own quiet stable, where the cow will be less annoyed than in a strange place. After she has been shook up in a freight car she should have absolute rest and quiet. This is a little thing, but when your cow is fit you must remember she is very easily unfitted, and every farmer knows how sensitive a good dairy cow is to change. Let a boy or dog chase her for two rods and she shrinks in her yield of milk accordingly. So don't do anything to add to her disquiet.

Seventh.—Don't wait until the last day in the afternoon to order your car; have it on hand a day or two before and all ready bedded, and with a bit of hay in front of the cows before they go in, a barrel filled with water, and see that they are very quietly loaded into the car at least an hour before starting; give yourself or men plenty of time; see that the gang plank is littered with straw, and that they have everything done to ensure their safety and to avoid excitement. Tip the engineer if necessary, so he will start them out of the switch carefully.

Eighth.—Don't wait until you get to the fair grounds to know where your stalls are. Write the secretary and see, or have some one you can trust see for you, that your stalls are all ready bedded and hay in manger, and when your cattle arrive take your time in unloading, let the trainmen swear, and the superintendent of cattle damn. Don't hurry, don't get rattled, keep cool. It is enough to make a man lose his religion to have spent six weeks getting his cattle fit, and then when he gets them to the grounds have to tie them to a fence next to the railroad track because the stalls are not ready. There is no excuse on the part of a society for such gross neglect. Not a wax figure, or the most delicate piece of machinery, needs more careful handling than a herd of dairy cattle. When they have been brought up to the top notch some farmers have had such disheartening results that they say: "It don't pay to fit our cattle; we take them up out of pasture and take our chances; we know we are greatly handicapped, but we prefer to lose a prize rather than one of our best cows."

Ninth.—Don't use kerosene oil to make the cattle's hair lay smooth; it makes a botch job of it; a handful of oil-cake meal in their feed daily for a week or two before, and a soft brush to remove the dirt, will do the business to perfection.

Some of this is not exactly how to fit, but it amounts to the same thing if it tells you how to avoid some things that help to unfit. One thing more.

Begin watering your cattle at home in a pail, or, together with the excitement of the journey, they may refuse to drink on the grounds. Many a good cow has lost a prize by refusing to drink from a pail, because she never did such a thing before in her life. She goes into the ring all "gaunted up," and the judge sends her to the rubbish pile the first thing. "No barrel, no capacity, poor feeder," says the judge; or perhaps he knows the cow well—knows she is a good one—but he cannot help it, it is the owner's misfortune. He says he cannot let himself begin to make excuses for this cow or that;—if he did, where would he end; so out she goes.

FARM.

Haying Pointers.

To the Editor FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

SIR,—You have an excellent article in June 1st issue re cutting and curing clover, and only favorable comment can be made on same. Our system here is very similar to what you recommend. Would suggest, however, that all hay be cocked on day of cutting (provided it is cut on a drying day), otherwise the night dew considerably deteriorates its value. As a rule, on the third day, weather being favorable, hay is sufficiently sweated and ready for mow. Here we cut and always cock on same day.

I certainly agree with you re feeding clover hay to horses, and feel exceedingly pleased to have my view backed by your lucid argument in its favor.

From experience here we find that lucerne can be properly cured as you suggest, only care must be taken not to make large cocks.

Mr. Editor, keep us posted up in our "good and glorious" cause by such edifying reading as paragraph referred to, and appreciated by

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Haymaking in Nova Scotia.

In curing clover my method has been to strike the first settled weather in July, or as soon as the clover is ready to cut. We prefer to mow in the afternoon and evening, and, as clover with us is never less than three tons per acre, we can usually get enough down without starting the machine in the morning. We do not touch it again till about four o'clock the next day, when we turn the green side to the dew and leave it in that shape for the second night. In the morning we open out a little more thoroughly, shaking the green bunches well out, and towards night, while the hay is good and hot, and before any dew falls, we cock snugly. I might say here, that we never use a horse rake in clover, for two reasons: First—I have never yet found a horse rake that would leave a good crop of clover in as good form for cocking as it is in the swath; and, Secondly—Because we find it sheds the rain much better when cocked out of swath than out of windrow. Weather being favorable, we let it stand in cock for a couple of days; we then open out in morning, and turn over after a few hours' sun, and start teams hauling to barn. One of the disadvantages of this method is, we have a large quantity of hay out in case of bad weather, as we keep cutting every day; but even clover hay, after it has stood over night in snug cocks, will turn quite a shower of rain.

Timothy is much easier to handle. We cut it in evening, or in morning after the dew is pretty well off, and turn over about noon, start rake about three o'clock, cock snugly for over night, turning out the next morning; it will be ready for the barn about noon, with very little turning, provided the weather is favorable. Of course, no one can lay down cast-iron rules for haymaking in our Nova Scotia climate, and it is often a question of letting hay spoil outdoors or putting it in the barn to spoil, and of two evils we try to choose the least.

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Cut the Clover Early.

If possible let the farm work be well forward in this month of June so that haymaking may commence as soon as the clover is fairly in bloom. Cut first such fields as may have in them any noxious weeds that are liable to ripen early and thus to spread from the seed. If it is intended to harvest clover seed from the second crop it is well to cut the first crop early. If the purpose is to plow down the clover sod in any field as a preparation for fall wheat it should be cut early so that advantage may be taken of any wet spells that may come to keep the teams going turning under the sod, which should be immediately rolled and harrowed, the harrowing to be repeated frequently, especially after each rain, to solidify the ground and to retain the moisture in the land. This makes a fine preparation for fall wheat, and no matter how dry the months of August and September may be the land will contain sufficient moisture to give the wheat a good start when sown and to keep it going on. Early cut clover, if well cured by exposure to wind and sun for a day or two and allowed to stand in cock for three or four days, if weather permits, makes the very best and most nutritious hay; and the aftergrowth of pasture on early cut clover meadows is so much more abundant than on those cut later that it makes a wonderful difference in the amount of feed a field will produce, even in a dry season.

Harvesting Clover.

To the Editor FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

SIR,—Clover, next to silage, is the most valuable crop for stock that a farmer can grow, and therefore should have the greatest care. Turnips might not suffer to a very large extent by three or four days' neglect—their product is not damaged by a shower of rain, while a shower of rain on the clover at a certain stage of its curing would deteriorate the value of the crop from 40 to 60 per cent. Clover also, like silage, should be cut at a certain stage to get the most food value. In the corn crop every successful siloist knows that the crop increases in value up to the glazing stage, after which every day allowed to pass is a decrease in the palatability of the silage. The clover plant follows the same lines. The object of every plant is to reproduce its kind, and every growth to the time the seed is ready to mature has the one object. When the seed is formed nature has no further use for the leaves and stems and they begin to decay; the leaves dry up and fall off and the stalks become woody. The proper time to cut clover, therefore, is when the plant is in full bloom and the seed pods formed; this takes place before the heads turn brown.

There are different methods of harvesting the crop, and every farmer (almost) "thinks he knows it all." I don't. I think the object should be to get it in the barn dry, with as much of the leaves on as possible, and with as green an appearance as possible. If it is allowed to get wet and has a bleached appearance, with most of the leaves left on the ground, it would require the farmer to furnish green goggles to make the cattle take to it. The following appears to me to be a good method, with variations to suit the weather: Commence to cut after four o'clock in the afternoon and cut until nine in the morning (if necessary). The object of this is that the clover will not have commenced to wilt to any extent before the dew falls, and therefore is not affected by the dew. If the following day is warm, with a good breeze, after noon put on the tedder or turn with forks. By five o'clock it will be sufficiently dry to put up, when it is allowed to sweat 60 hours or thereabout. Turn it out gently (so as not to shake off the leaves) in the forenoon, and draw after dinner. Keep a certain amount cut ahead so as to keep the hands going, never cutting more than the strength of the force available can handle. It is advisable to put on about a gallon of salt to the load; it makes the hay more palatable, and, I think, helps it to retain its green color.

If properly cured, and properly fed, it is better food for horses than timothy, as it contains more food elements. The mistake with most horse feeders is that they imagine a horse should eat all the time he is in the stable, and if they go in and see the manger empty they immediately fill it up. The clover, if properly cured, is so palatable that they would eat too much of it. If they would feed what they would eat up clean in say an hour, and if any is left remove it until feeding time again, they would never be troubled with colic. If they feed musty clover, and all they will eat of it, it will likely affect the horses' wind. If fed with judgment it is superior to timothy hay.

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J. E. G.

Clover Cutting and Curing.

There has been a great deal said about clover during the past few years; quite sufficient, one would think, to convince the most sceptical. Still, some of us farmers do stick to the dear old timothy. Perhaps if we would sit down and think how dear it is we might think less of it and more of clover. This old world of ours must be moving, and not a few wide-awake agriculturists are helping it along. When I read so much about clover and contrast the ideas expressed now with those I remember hearing when a boy—which is not so long ago—I wonder whether it is the time that has changed or the clover. I never did quite fall in with the old idea that timothy was the only hay fit for a horse to eat; that he must have all of it he could roll into himself, and oats too, or he could do no work; that clover might do very well for the cows and sheep, but keep it away from the horses, and as for hogs and hens, I don't think such a preposterous notion ever entered the mind. Look at it now. I was very glad to see in your June 1st issue the statement: "Early-cut, well-cured clover is undoubtedly the best all-round fodder for either horses, cattle or sheep, and even hogs and hens are kept in a healthy and thriving condition by the use of clover as a part of their winter ration." That clover is an all-round fodder for all our farm stock is becoming more and more patent to all who will give it a fair trial. We think that well-cured lucerne clover will not only form a complete ration for horses during the winter, but for a summer ration, and for a working team give me the lucerne hay in preference to timothy hay and three gallons of oats per day. I remember hearing T. B. Terry, of Ohio, that clover king, saying he had a working team thirteen years old, and he offered \$500 to any man who could prove they had ever had one gallon of oats during those thirteen years; they got nothing but clover hay; did all the work of the farm; always looked well, and we might also add that neither was touched with the heaves. I could hardly credit the statement then, but I am sure now it can be done; such managing would greatly lessen the cost of production. As for the hens, all I know