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"THE PROFESSION WHICH I HAVE EMBRACED REQUIRES A KNOWLEDGE OF EVERYTHING."

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Finished Beef Cattle

BY PROF. G. E. DAY

IN normal times it is counted good business to give our beef cattle a good degree of finish before sending them to market. The higher price obtained for well-finished cattle has usually been profitable to the feeder.

At the present time, however, we are facing decidedly abnormal conditions. Statistics indicate that the world is facing a heavy shortage of wheat. If these statistics are correct it looks as though it might be necessary to use grains heretofore employed almost exclusively for the feeding of animals, to help out the supply of wheat. As a matter of fact, investigations are in progress to determine the extent to which wheat flour may be adulterated with the flour of other cereals and still retain its palatability for human consumption.

If it becomes necessary, therefore, to utilize the coarser cereals for human food it must mean a shortening up of concentrates for fattening animals, and the question arises whether under present prospects we should not make a special effort to use the smallest possible amount of concentrates, and utilize to the fullest extent bulky fodders in the fattening of our cattle.

Some years ago the Ontario Agricultural College secured a gain in weight of 2,180 lbs. in the case of fattening steers, from the use of 2,187 lbs. of ground barley and 729 lbs. of bran. This is very little more than one pound of concentrates used for each pound of gain in weight, the balance of the ration being made up of hay, corn silage, and roots, in the proportion of 1, 2 and 3 respectively. The steers used in this experiment were cheap, common cattle, and the gains they made were not large, being approximately 1½ lbs. per steer, per day, for a period of 165 days. The cattle were not well finished when marketed, and dressed a little less than 57% of their live weight, but the beef from these cattle was much superior to a great deal of the beef we are forced to consume in these days, and, as has been pointed out, it was produced with the use of a very small quantity of material which was fit for human consumption.

One thing is certain, we cannot produce the maximum amount of highly finished beef and, at the same time, produce the maximum amount of cereals for human consumption. It would seem, therefore, the part of wisdom to economize on the use of cereal grains in the feeding of beef cattle, and to utilize to the fullest extent bulky fodders, even though we have to be content with smaller gains in weight and a poorer quality of beef. As previously stated, these are abnormal times and methods which would have been severely condemned a few years ago may be the very best and safest methods we can follow at the present time. Our great effort must be to get human food from our bulky fodders by converting it into meat,