

FARM AND DAIRY



& RURAL HOME

We Welcome Practical Progressive Ideas.

The Recognized Exponent of Dairying in Canada.

Trade increases the wealth and glory of a country; but its real strength and stamina are to be looked for among the cultivators of the land.—Lord Chatham.

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The Road to Dairy Herd Improvement

A Personal Story of Breeding Experience in Our Own Herd.

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OURS has been to a greater or less degree, a dairy farm ever since my father purchased the first 87 acres of our present 335-acre farm over 30 years ago. That is, we have always milked cows. I cannot say, however, that we were really entitled to the honor of being called dairymen until 15 years ago. It was then that we purchased our first pure-bred dairy sire and started in real earnest to build up a high-class productive herd. Though slow, we have not found the road to dairy herd improvement a hard one. It has called for persistence to overcome difficulties and disappointments. We have found, as all others must find, that increasing the producing ability of a herd, is not a mechanical process governed by rules of mathematical accuracy, but a process in which we work with living animals and the results are not always certain. We have persevered, however, and although we have not yet attained our ideal, we are much nearer it than we were when we started on the road 15 years ago.

Our herd is now about evenly divided between pure-bred and grade animals. We purchased our first pure-bred Holstein females nearly 12 years ago. We began cautiously and purchased two calves, only one of which, however, proved to be a success. Our present pure-breds are therefore nearly all descended from this one cow, and as fast as they can outyield our grade animals, they are replacing them in the herd. We are not accepting any animals merely because they



A Result of Grading. She Has All the Marks of a Pure Bred Holstein.

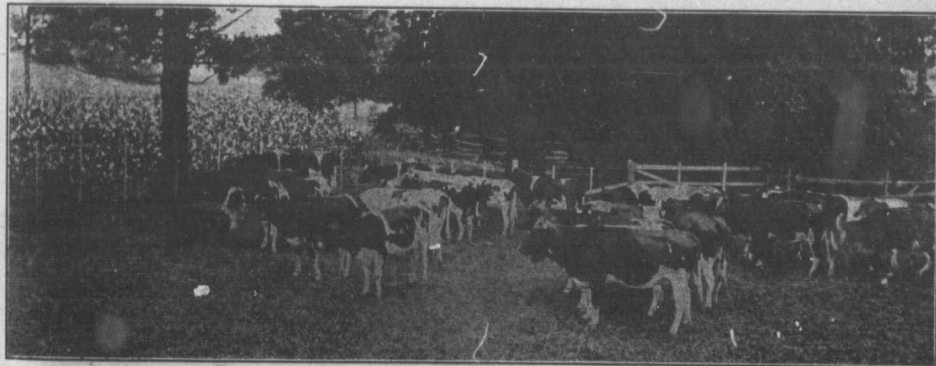
have pedigrees. They must win the right to a place in our stable. We will give them as good a chance as the grades and no better. Beside these two heifer calves we have purchased no females in 15 years, our idea being that a farmer can develop a herd with less outlay and un-

certainty than he can purchase one. We aim to keep up and improve the quality of the herd through the sire. The one we have at present is a grandson of old Pontiac Korndyke. Last year we were milking an average of 21 head, and their production was 8,145 lbs. of milk. In 1912, the average production was a couple of pounds more. We have milked as high as 30 cows at one time.

The Breeding Farm

Our herd improvement is unique, in that it is being carried on exclusively with the original grade and pure-bred foundations. Of eight unrelated families in the original herd and the two purchased pure-breds, only two have yet been entirely weeded out of the herd, but two families predominate quite largely at the present time. We are taking too much pride in our little demonstration on herd improvement by selection and the use of good sires, to be willing to spoil it by mixing in fresh strains, which might, or might not, hasten things financially. Besides our interest in this as an experiment, we have also had in view the danger of introducing disease with purchases. Only once have we discovered tuberculosis in the herd, and then the prompt application of the tuberculin test and removal of a second animal cleaned things up so that subsequent testing has found conditions right again.

We have not gone blindly. We have kept records from the first, and consistently weeded out the poorest producers. The degree of success that we have had in the improving of the pro-



"Increasing the Producing Ability of a Herd is Not a Mechanical Process Governed by Rules of Mathematical Accuracy." Photo on Farm of J. W. Richardson, Haldimand Co., Ont.