



Plossie and Red Rose, 1st and 2nd prize Shorthorn heifer calves, at the Ladner and Westminster Exhibitions. Owned by A. D. Patterson, Ladner, B.C.

Selecting the Stock Bull

The breeder, and likewise the average farmer, has no more important work to perform than the selection of a stock bull. In selecting the stock bull the aim should be to bring about an improvement in the herd. He should be selected not merely for the purpose of getting calves, but to get calves of a quality superior to those already in the herd. In other words, an improvement on what has gone before should be the constant aim. The average farmer is often tempted to buy a bull just because he is cheap, which is a mistake. A bull, even if he has a pedigree as long as your arm, will be dear at any price unless he has the quality to improve the herd. Even if it costs a couple of hundred dollars to get a good bull, the extra price will be made up in one season by the increased value of the calves, even if there are only ten or twelve cows in the herd. While pedigree is important it should not take the place of proper conformation and constitution.

The pedigree craze is not as strong as it was, and it is fortunate that such is the case. And still there are lots of bulls in use in the country that have a pedigree and nothing else. A good grade bull would be better. But there is noticeable improvement in this direction, and the average farmer is not so easily caught as he once was, by high-sounding names and long pedigrees. He is looking more to the individual and not to his name. When he does this in every case so much the better for the cattle trade of the country.

But it must not be inferred from all this, that we do not believe in pedigree, we most certainly do believe in it. But it must not be put in place of individual quality. A pedigree is of importance because it is generally associated with a greater degree of prepotency. Besides, the best animals the world has produced have come from pedigreed stock. But this is not saying that because an animal has this blood in his veins he will in every case be a good individual. Pedigree and good quality in the individual must go hand in hand.

The breeder should always remember that the greater part of the improvement in a herd depends upon the merits of the bull. If he is weak the herd will be weak, and what is more will deteriorate in quality. The thing to do then is to study your herd and select a bull that will raise the standard a notch or two higher. And as your herd improves and it becomes necessary to get another "head" of the herd secure one, if possible, that will carry the

improvement still further. Rome was not built in a day. Neither can a herd be graded up to perfection in a year or two. It must be by a gradual process of selection and breeding, but it is as sure as it is slow, and will bring good results in the end. Of course if the money is forthcoming a choice herd can be got from the start by buying the pick from the herds of others, who have spent years of careful study of the whole question. But the average farmer is not in a position to do this, nor is he likely to do so if he were in a position to.

In establishing a herd it is often the beginner who errs on the pedigree side. Good advice to follow is to examine the animal first and the pedigree after. If he is a good individual and is backed up by a good pedigree, the owner will likely want a good sum of money to part with him. But, nevertheless, if the price is within reason, such an animal is the cheapest in the long run. On the other hand, a good individual with not so fancy a pedigree may not command so high a price, but will be good property all the same. It has been said that if the animal is right this is assurance that the blood lines are right. While this may be true in a general way, yet an animal rightly bred and of good individual merit, is apt to be more prepotent for good than one of equal merit and yet somewhat mixed in his breeding.

Study the individual in any case. The more our farmers become educated up to the point where they will buy nothing but animals of good individuality the greater improvement there will be, not only in the grade, but in the pure-bred herds of the country. Besides, more careful discrimination in regard to the individual animal on the part of every buyer would result in a lot of inferior animals that might otherwise be kept for breeding purposes, being sent to the market for beef. Buy only the best and weed out your poor ones, is sound advice for every breeder to follow.

The Profitable Time for Fattening Cattle

For the past four years Mr. J. H. Griedale, Agriculturist, Central Experimental Farm, Ottawa, has been carrying on several experiments in cattle feeding. One of the objects of these experiments was to determine the most profitable age for fattening purposes. He summarizes the results in his evidence before the Agricultural Committee as follows:

Four-year-olds have gained at the rate of 1.63 pounds a day. They have cost to produce one hundred pounds of gain \$6.61 and they have an average selling price of \$5.32 1-2 per cwt.

The three-year-olds have gained at the rate of 1.60 pounds a day. They have cost \$5.91 to produce one hundred pounds of gain and have sold at an average of \$5.25 1-2 per cwt.

Two-year-olds have gained at the rate of 1.54 pounds a day. They have cost \$5.24 to produce one hundred pounds of gain and sold at \$5.17 1-2.

The yearlings have gained at the rate of 1.70 pounds a day, which is the highest rate of gain. They have cost \$3.27 per one hundred pounds, the lowest price and of course we have never sold them.

You will notice that the younger the animals the more economically the gain is made.

Sheep Versus Dogs Again

Mr. Richard Gibson, Delaware, Ont., writing to the *American Sheep Breeder* recently, says:

"Poor old 'Allen's Star,' the sire of the second prize pen of five lambs by same sire at the last International, has been roughly used, and alas! I am afraid completely ruined. Dogs have just crushed and mangled the bones of one of the lambs, and the bones of one of the lambs will be lost for the season. One young man happened to be in the field at the time and saw the whole transaction. He clubbed the dogs off and the owner says 'I will pay for the damage.' But how can it be estimated? Who dare be bold enough to estimate his loss to me? He had 55 ewes with him, especially selected for certain traits or breeding characteristics. For instance, he could not sire a lamb carrying black wool. What is such a ram worth in a flock?"

And what is such a ram worth? Can you estimate it? What is a good ram worth to a flock, and for that matter what is a good breeding ewe worth? Those who uphold the law as at present enforced in this country regarding the dog versus sheep question, tell us that every farmer who has sheep worried by dogs is entitled to damages. But what damages does he usually get? Usually a paltry sum based upon what the sheep will sell for in the open market. This may be satisfactory when applied to sheep intended purely for the flock. But what about the breeding stock? Will the owners have to be satisfied with a paltry carcass valuation because some vicious dog has been let loose among his breeding flock? It should not be. He should be paid in full what the animals are worth for breeding purposes. True, there are rams and ewes kept for breeding purposes upon which a midnight descent of the dogs would confer a blessing upon the owner. But in the great majority of cases our sheep breeders have higher ambitions. They are breeding to a fixed type and may have plans extending over several years. A breeder may have been maturing his plans for years and have got his flock up to a high state of efficiency when along comes the midnight dog playing sad havoc and destroying all his skill and work. The next day the valuator, after having looked up the price of mutton at the nearest market, comes along and places his valuation accordingly. Is it any wonder the breeder becomes discouraged and goes out of the business?

It would be discouraging enough even if he got the full valuation of his flock as established for breeding purposes, but to be put off with a mere carcass valuation is nothing short of a calamity. But what is to be done about it? Cannot something be done to prevent the ravages of dogs among sheep? This kind of thing goes on year after year and we accept it as complacently as if