

THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE AND HOME MAGAZINE.

THE LEADING AGRICULTURAL JOURNAL IN
THE DOMINION.

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1. THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE is published on the first and fifteenth of each month. It is impartial and independent of all cliques or parties, handsomely illustrated with original engravings, and furnishes the most profitable, practical and reliable information for farmers, dairymen, gardeners, and stockmen, of any publication in Canada.
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Questions and Answers Department.

The "Farmer's Advocate," at considerable outlay and trouble, furnishes replies in each issue to a great variety and number of enquiries, mostly of a very practical nature. Some of these frequently involve days of careful research on the part of our editorial or contributing staff of specialists. Our aim is to afford real help in real difficulties, and that the department is appreciated is evident from the increasing calls for information and the thankful letters received from those who benefit thereby. Occasionally some reader is probably disappointed by not receiving a reply. The reason will be found in non-compliance with rule No. 3, at the head of that department, which requires that all enquiries "must be accompanied by the full name and post-office address of the writer, as a guarantee of good faith, but not necessarily for publication." This condition of securing an answer stands out plainly in every issue so that he who runs may read and understand. It is a very simple condition, to which no well-intentioned person can object. If for some particular reason the enquirer does not desire his or her name published, such a request will be respected by us. We therefore trust that hereafter all concerned will strictly heed the rule in question, as well as the others which appear at the head of the "Q. and A." department.

J. R. Alexander, of Brant County, writes us: "I may say I take a number of papers of different kinds, but I would give up any of them before the 'Farmer's Advocate.'"

Feeding Beef Cattle.

Whether there is any considerable profit in feeding beef cattle in stables during winter for the export or the home market is a question that can only be solved by actual experience, since its solution depends largely upon the price at which they are bought and the price at which they are sold. Much also depends upon the quality of the cattle, upon the judgment exercised in the selection, and upon the skill of the feeder in adopting and dispensing a combination of foods that shall prove at once economical and effective in preserving health and steadily increasing the weight of the animals, bringing them up to the necessary standard of condition to command the best price current for their class when it is decided to sell. We are presuming that the cattle have to be bought, because we know that comparatively few farmers in this country raise as many as they require if they go into the business of feeding as a specialty to any considerable extent. But if one has the cattle without buying, the question of profit or loss in feeding can only be determined, as in the other case, on the basis of the market value of the animals at the time of commencing to feed and at the time of disposal. While, as is the case in most things in connection with farming and stock-raising, if a strict account be kept of the market value of all the feed and labor involved in the production of the finished article and charged against it, it will be found to tax the skill of an expert mathematician to figure a favorable balance for the producer, yet the fact that many successful farmers have continued for many years to buy and feed beef cattle for the market would appear to be reasonably good evidence that when judiciously managed there is in the average of years profit in the business. But we judge that this profit will, upon investigation, be found mainly in the favorable disposal of the fodder, grain and roots raised on the farm, through the medium of the cattle instead of on the market as such, since for most of this there really is no demand, while for beef in these times there is a fairly reliable market at paying prices. If it can be shown that hay and grain is worth more fed to cattle than sold as hay and grain, it is surely wisdom and economy to feed it on the farm rather than haul it to the market. Even if no balance can be shown in favor of feeding it, if the accounts are about even without counting the difference in the labor involved, the value of the manure made will more than compensate in the maintenance of the fertility of the farm and its ability to produce paying crops of any kind.

The profit in feeding will depend very much on how the cattle are selected and bought; indeed, it may be said that a steer well selected is half fed. Only such as show evidence of the influence of the blood of one of the pure-bred beef breeds are likely to prove profitable feeders. They must be low-set, wide-chested, smoothly turned, and have a soft, plastic hide and fine hair, in order to make the best return for the feed they consume. The ill-bred, long-legged, narrow-chested, high-boned sort should be left severely alone, no matter how big or how low the price asked, as the chances are that they will prove unprofitable feeders, and one or two of such in a bunch of good ones will handicap the sale of the lot. Uniformity of size, type and quality counts for a good deal in the selling of a bunch of cattle, and this should be considered in the selection and buying. If one cannot get the number of the kind he wants in his own neighborhood or within a convenient distance, it may be well to communicate with a dealer and arrange to select from a bunch when they are gotten together. Some feeders, by watching their opportunity, have succeeded in getting satisfactory lots at the stock-yards at times when there is a large run of cattle in or the demand is not very brisk, and some have done well by leaving the selection to a reliable dealer at the yards, with instructions that only good and well-bred cattle shall be included. The weight of cattle bought in November for the export trade in the spring should not be less than 1,000 lbs., and had better be 1,100 lbs. to 1,200, at say two and a half years old.

On good old pasture, where they can get a full bite, cattle will do well without other feed through most of November, but if grass is short or of a soft and watery nature it will be economy to feed them some hay or corn fodder in ricks or

boxes when the weather gets cold, to keep up the internal heat and save them from losing flesh, as flesh lost at this time must be made up before any gain in weight can be made. When the animals are placed in the stalls or sheds for winter feeding, assuming that they are to be fed to a finish for sale in the early spring, the feeding at first should be moderately light and should consist largely of roughage or bulky food such as hay, straw and chaff, with a few roots or a light ration of silage for succulence to avoid the constipation which is apt to occur when a sudden change is made from green to dry feed. If any grain is fed in the first weeks it should be of a light nature, such as a mixture of bran and ground oats or barley, to be gradually increased in weight and strength until full feeding is entered upon. The results of tests at the experimental stations has shown and the experience of successful individual feeders confirms the theory that light grain rations are more economical and profitable than heavy, especially in the first months of the feeding period. In the finishing stage the grain ration may well be made richer, but at all times there is economy and safety, as well as science, in feeding a mixture of grains, rather than a single variety, and at all times it is well if the price of bran and oats is such as to justify their use that they should form a part of the ration, and at all times the grain ration should be fed mixed with cut hay or straw, silage or pulped roots, or, better, with a combination of these, in order that in the processes of mastication and digestion the elements of the food may be assimilated to the best advantage. It is perhaps needless to add that regularity in the times of feeding, watering, grooming and cleaning out of stables is an important factor in the steady gain in weight of the animals. Comfort and quietness will go far in the attainment of this end. It is a mistake to allow the cattle to be disturbed more than is really necessary between the times of feeding, and care should be observed from the first to see that they are free from lice or skin disease of any kind, and to this end, as well as to render grooming more effective, the hair should be clipped short the whole length of the back and about the root of the tail, and to secure cleanliness the switch should also be shortened and reduced in bulk. But the first thing to be done is to secure the cattle, and the main object in writing this article is to remind those who have not already made their selections, that November is the last month in which this can be done to good advantage in the average of years. In any case it is not well to be too hasty in buying if one is not fairly well satisfied with the quality of cattle in sight; better take time and be sure you are right in this respect than to buy cattle of inferior type or quality, for they are almost sure to prove unsatisfactory and unprofitable. We have given no opinion as to the price a feeder will be justified in paying for cattle at this time, in view of the probable market prices in the coming spring, preferring to leave that question to those of our readers who are more actively engaged in the work and whom we invite to give their views on the subject in brief letters in our next issue. The present scarcity of good cattle offering keeps the price higher than is usual at this time of the year, but the prospect is that this scarcity will continue for a year or two, and that prices will continue high. If one buys in the open market he must pay the market price for the class of cattle he wants, and it is unwise to buy an inferior class simply because the price is lower. In this as in many other transactions, the best is the cheapest, though the price may be high.

A Valuable Library.

To the Editor "Farmer's Advocate":

Sir,—The "Advocate" dated October 15th came duly to hand, but I have not yet received the one due October 1st. Would you kindly send it to me, as I value it so highly that I do not wish to miss one single number. Having them on file for a number of years without a single break in their numbers, shows how we appreciate your paper. Although we take four other newspapers, and are very fond of reading the latest news, yet when the papers arrive, the "Advocate" is the first one examined. I do not believe there is any better farmer's paper in America, nor one more devoted to the farmers' interests. In the "Advocate" which we have on file we consider we have a vast amount of useful knowledge; in fact, they make a very good farmer's library in themselves. By sending the paper for October 1st you will confer a very great favor.

Kent Co., Ont.

J. W. FLEMING.

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