

Breeders' Clubs and their Work

Most significant move of the time among breeders of purebred stock

By E. A. Weir



The Aberdeen-Angus is a phenomenal breed in quality, as feeders and are very beautiful, being black in color and always polled.

The most significant move in livestock work in recent years on this continent is the marked step toward better organization. Clubs and associations for the promotion of their own particular breeds are being born over night in almost every state of the Union and every province of the Dominion. Most of this has occurred in the last two years, and in Canada practically all of it since one year ago. It applies to horses, cattle, sheep, and swine, but particularly to cattle. In Alberta, within the past 12 months, local Holstein-Friesian, Aberdeen-Angus, Hereford and Shorthorn associations have been organized. A few weeks ago a start was made on a Shorthorn club in Manitoba. This organization will be completed and future plans laid at Brandon during the winter fair early in March.

In all parts of the United States these associations have caught on like magic. At first in many parts there were state organizations, or some like the New England Hereford Breeders' Association covered several states. The Pan-Handle Association of Texas served an immense territory. Other associations were small and represented small districts or some particular locality or part of a state. Now, where there were large associations first formed, many sub-associations are being started, and the whole movement is broadening down into hundreds of districts, is touching thousands of breeders, acquainting them with the benefits of getting together and arousing them to activity and enthusiasm. Of course this does not happen with all associations organized, but it does where the members have sufficient mutual confidence in one another and enough unselfishness to work together for the good of the breed. It is a clear case of co-operation, of the application of the same principles to certain phases of breeding, and especially marketing of pure-bred livestock as has been applied in this country to the marketing of grain and the purchase of many necessities. It is the modern application of business organization to this great pure-bred livestock work.

Assistance from Parent Associations

These breed associations have received great assistance from the parent pure-bred associations in many cases, and especially in the United States, where they have been the subject of special encouragement from the Shorthorn and Hereford associations. Many of the large American breed associations have conducted in the last few years extensive advertising campaigns, which have taken the form of enhanced prizes in the show rings, advertising in the agricultural and local press, enormous circular work and travelling agents who spend all their time on intensive field work in the interests of the breed. In this work the Holstein-Friesian Association of America has been the foremost of all. It has accomplished wonderful things in the last five years. Its official paper, the Holstein-Friesian Register, has an enormous circulation. The



A Shorthorn head. Whites are not so popular as roans or even reds among Shorthorns. The boy who owns a pure-bred calf has something to be proud of.

same is true of "The Shorthorn in America," published by the Shorthorn Association, and the Hereford Journal. The Shorthorn Association sends its paper, which is published every three months, free for one year to each breeder who wishes it.

Most of the local associations or clubs are formed with a simple constitution and by-laws to guide them and a small executive to carry out the wishes of the members. They have an annual meeting, usually at the time of some important public fair or sale, and in many cases a regular meeting is held at some other time during the year. This may be at some prominent breeder's home or at some central point where it is easy to get the members together. At such meetings addresses are given by leading breeders or others directly interested in the breed, and plans are arranged for the year's work.

Objects of an Association

What then are the primary objects of these associations and what are some of the things they may do? Some of these might perhaps best be stated in tabular form. No doubt others will suggest themselves to readers.

- 1.—The education of farmers and stockmen generally to the advantages of better breeding and the use of pure-bred sires.
- 2.—The creation of a mutual feeling of good-will among breeders of the particular breed and the bringing of them together for mutual co-operation and assistance.
- 3.—The encouragement of community breeding



The greatest breed of the range. At Calgary, last spring, the Alberta Hereford breeders formed a large and promising association.

and the enlarging of the market for good pure-bred stock.

- 4.—The encouragement of the study of pedigrees, the improvement of various strains of the breed affected and the general building up of better quality stock.

What are some of the ways in which their objects may be accomplished?

- 1.—By the holding of public sales under the auspices of the association. This greatly assists in securing top prices for stock, particularly for small or somewhat isolated breeders. These sales, properly handled, greatly help in setting high standards for private sales. They give other breeders an opportunity to secure some choice foundation stock on which to build their herds. They in turn become buyers of better bulls from the larger breeders. No breeder of really good stock can hope to get values for his stock in his own country until there has grown up many smaller breeders. The Breeders' Gazette of Chicago, in its February 14, 1918, issue, contains five large advertisements carried by such breed associations. In one of these 20 different men are contributing 60 head of cows and bulls. This is an average of only three each and it is their first sale. These men said: "We each want to be represented in the first sale of the McLean County Shorthorn Breeders' Association with animals of merit, creditable to each of us and to the Shorthorn interests of the county. We will each consign of our best to this sale."

On February 26 all the Hereford breeders of the state of Kentucky are uniting in a big combined sale. The Hereford Breeders' Association of Illinois the day following is selling 60 head. On March 6 the Southern Iowa Breeders' Association is holding its first big auction of 50 Percheron horses, 25 stallions and 25 mares. An example of initiative is shown in the fact that "Percherons in Peace and War," a splendid film recently prepared on the breed in America, will be shown at a local theatre the evening before the sale.

In many such sales small breeders who could not advertise extensively enough to do merit to their stock are able, by joining with their neighbors, to secure the necessary publicity at small cost. The small man is the one most helped.

A live association before such a sale will appoint a committee to select the animals and make some careful estimates of their value. Many a good bull is wasted on poor females or the owner does not get what he should for him, simply because he does not know enough about cattle to recognize his worth. Recently an Ohio breeder sold a young bull for \$2,250. He had never sold bulls outside his own neighborhood, and did not properly care for or grow out his young bulls until he was called upon by a noted breeder, who recognized the worth of his stock and advised him to consign them to the state breeders' sale. A committee of good men to encourage breeders would have a big effect in helping new men to get the most out of their stock.

The tendency in large public sales at the present time is gradually toward the conducting of these under the auspices of breed associations and clubs. This is very noticeable in the United States, and it will not be surprising to see a more marked drift that way in Canada before long.

Another phase of this might be the making of importations of good substantial female foundation stock for starting new herds. There are breeders opposed to this idea because they think too many may get started in the business of raising bulls and their market might thereby become restricted. As a matter of fact the effect would be directly opposite. Fortunately, such men are few and far between. They make me think of the farmer who had a negro working for him. The negro died and he hadn't enough money coming to bury him. The farmer went out among the neighbors to raise it. To the first man he met he said: "Say, give me a dollar to help bury the negro." "Here's five," said the neighbor.

Fairs and Exhibitions

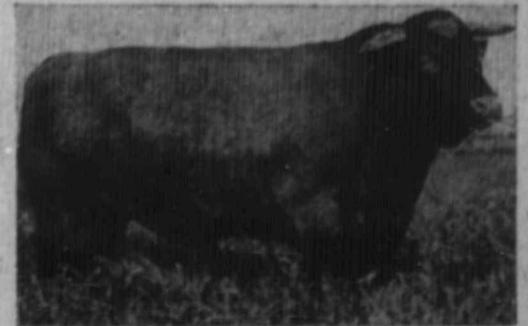
2.—Through fairs and exhibitions. This is one of the most commonly practised methods of breed promotion, especially by new clubs. I do not think it nearly so effective as the public sale, but then every club cannot hold such a sale. There frequently is a tendency also to distribute money for which proper returns are not received.

Special prizes may be offered or the regular fair prizes supplemented. Futurity prizes might be offered for calves. Such competitions have been conducted with great success at different places. Many striking shows have been staged by associations in many parts of the United States, when without an association there would have been no concerted action and no show. This work can be made particularly effective in building up strong local shows. Boys' calf-feeding competitions, such as are now held at Brandon, Calgary and this spring at Edmonton, form a very good line of patronage for clubs, because it particularly interests the boys, and they are the breeders of our future herds and flocks. In connection with many fairs an association might see that suitable judges are selected to place animals in such a manner as will do justice to the most approved type of the breed and acquaint the public with it by way of talks or explanations that would prove valuable publicity work for the breed. In the same way a club is in a position to select an auctioneer who knows well lines of breeding and pedigrees in the particular breed concerned. There may be some Shorthorn auctioneers who know Hereford pedigrees fairly well and vice versa, but they are almost as scarce as hen's teeth. In fact, too many know little or nothing about pedigrees of any sort.

Proper Use of the Press

3.—By a proper use of the press. I do not think there is any agency so powerful in helping breeders when properly used as the press. Every great commercial organization recognizes that fact today and prepares for it by setting apart a definite sum for advertising. But great as is the power of judicious advertising, a proper use of the press implies much

Continued on Page 32



Oakland Star, a famous Shorthorn sire, long in use in Manitoba. The distribution of better sires should be a big work of breeders' clubs.