

may be some increase in milk yields, the increased yields do not in all instances pay for the grain consumed.

The pastures in the early spring are immature, and the grass contains a high percentage of water and a low percentage of dry matter, and the high producing cow does not secure sufficient nutriment to furnish the needs of the body and maintain a large production of milk. For a cow of this type, that is, one that produces one to two pounds of butter fat daily, a grain ration should supplement the pasture, and she should be allowed all the leguminous hays that she will consume.

The cow that is producing an average quantity of milk, say from 25 to 30 pounds of milk on average quality, will produce but little more when fed grain to supplement good pasture and for economy of production should not be so fed. Experimentation has proved that an additional pound of milk was secured for each pound of grain fed; but it was observed that the cows that received grain during the pasture season gave 16 per cent better returns after the grazing period than did those that received no grain. In other words there was an increase in weight in the lot that were fed grain which resulted in the laying up of a considerable amount of surplus nutrients on their body which was utilized in future production.

#### Raising More Cattle

With the extreme high prices of feeding cattle during the past two years, interest among farmers in raising cattle is growing very rapidly. In fact, that

is one reason why cattle are so high in price. The demand for good breeding cows and young heifers comes not only from the Corn Belt states, but also from the range sections, where herds have been sold down closer than ever in response to tempting prices. It is safe to assume that high cattle prices will prevail for many years to come, and there is no doubt but that those who build up good breeding herds will get good pay for the feed they put into them, while through the manure produced they will increase the fertility of their land and thus indirectly get a second profit.

Up until recent years, while cattle were abundant in the range sections, stockers and feeders could be bought at prices that usually permitted the feeder to fatten them at a profit, but this can no longer be done with the same degree of certainty; the margin between feeding and fat cattle is so small that only under the most favorable feed and market conditions can the feeder get market value for the grain fed. This is why so many are turning their attention to raising cattle or raising and fattening them, rather than to finishing cattle raised by others.

On high priced land—that is, land worth \$125 to \$150 per acre—there is less speculation connected with raising feeding cattle for the market than with fattening purchased stock. The man who is in position to milk at least half of his cows and let the other half raise all the calves has a safe business. A herd of breeding cows can be maintained on relatively cheap feed, such as silage, clover or alfalfa hay. Particularly is this true on farms that are so located that a certain portion of the

land is not suitable for grain growing and therefore must be kept on permanent pasture. Breeding cows can make excellent use of this and thus convert relatively unproductive tracts into valuable farm assets.

Under certain conditions beef cattle can be profitably raised without milking the cows, but as a rule the profits will be considerably smaller. It is much better to milk them and raise the calves on skim milk. Not all men can handle skim milk calves to advantage; this, however, is not due to the system but rather to the man in charge. Skim milk calves should be fed grain as soon as they can be made to eat it. On 14 to 16 pounds of skim milk and what corn they will eat, calves can be raised that will be of as good quality in the fall as those that have nursed their dams without being fed grain.

Such calves will be worth \$25 to \$30 per head in the fall, when they may either be put in the feed lot and fattened for the June or a later market, or they may be carried through the winter and sold the following spring as stockers, or, if desired, they may be carried through the second summer on grass; in fact, they may be handled in one of a good many ways without consuming any great quantity of high priced feed, should this be desirable. Under average conditions, no doubt the most profitable way will be to sell the calves at the age of 12 to 14 months as baby beefs. Then when they are ready for the market whatever they bring has come off the farm. Add to this the income in butter fat from the cows and the total makes a nice sum. The principal advantage of this plan arises from the

elimination of the speculative features connected with buying cattle for the feed lot and finishing them on high priced feed.

#### Home Curing of Meat

One of the attractive features of the combination show held in connection with the meetings of organized agriculture in Nebraska was the cured meat exhibit. This was officially known as the ham and bacon show. The entries were not as numerous as had been expected, but it was explained that this was due to the fact that the home curing of meats was almost a lost art on the farms of the West. Eight exhibits were made by as many farmers. These consisted of specimens of ham, bacon and shoulder. It was contended by the managers of the exhibit that the home-cured meat has a great advantage in sweetness and tenderness over the packers' product, and that the object of the show was to induce interest in this feature of farm production. The exhibit was the centre of a great deal of interest, notwithstanding its meagerness, and several prosperous Lincoln citizens engaged in spirited bidding for possession of the specimens shown. The prizes were offered by the live stock breeders. H. H. Myers, of Fontanelle, received first and second prizes on ham, and Albert Kilgore, of Ewing, third. My Myers won first on bacon and W. B. Good, of Long Pine, second.

This part of the exhibition was overshadowed by the corn show, in which sixty boys and several girls were entered. There was also a number of specimens of bread, cakes and other dainties entered for prizes by girls from the farms, as well as specimens of needlework and sewing. This was open also to the boys, but none had the courage to enter.

#### Potato Planting

Written for The Western Home Monthly by W. R. Gilbert

The labor bill in connection with the growing of potatoes is one of the heaviest items relative to area the farmer has to bear. With the exception of hops, the potato is the most expensive besides being the most precarious of farm crops, and it also stands second to the hop as an illustration of the fact that bountiful production is not a guarantee of profit. The market is so thoroughly governed by the relationship of supply and demand that a small crop is often the more profitable. Potato growing is regulated largely by local physical conditions. There is probably not a farm in the country on which potatoes are not grown, but on the great majority the area does not exceed what is required for the needs of the farm. The cultivation of the crop on a commercial scale is quite a different matter. It is a prominent feature, perhaps the chief feature, in certain districts proved to be well adapted for the purpose, in the same sense as hops, and most kinds of fruit are local crops. In Ireland potato growing is more general because the tuber is a more prominent ingredient in the home diet, but it has been only within the last few years that the gravelly soils in Dublin County and in certain parts of Munster, have been utilized in the production of early potatoes.

The labor entailed in potato culture is of an expensive and exacting nature. The land has to be well tilled, for a loose rooting area is more important than might be imagined from the size of the sets. As a rule, the importance of a fine tilth is regulated by the size of the seeds sown, the turnip or the clovers for example, being more dependent upon a powdery seed bed than the bean or the oat. The potato, however, is an exception, and growers have noticed that efficient tillage, including the loosening of the sub-soil, or of what is known as the plow pan, facilitates the spreading of the roots, and indirectly affects the prosperity of the crops. The method of planting is also more laborious than that of most other crops.

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