

Selection and Breeding of Channel Island Cattle at Home.

Were the selection and breeding of dairy cattle better understood and more depended upon in the building up of dairy herds there would be less heard of unprofitable dairy cattle than at present. While the right foundation is absolutely necessary to success, the heifer's development and training has much to do with her future as a cow. The Channel Island breeds are recognized as special purpose cattle of peculiar excellence, and a glance at the practice of their breeders will teach much from which dairy husbandmen can appropriate lessons. Mr. F. S. Peer, of New York State, who has frequently officiated as judge of dairy cattle at our largest exhibitions, writes in the *Country Gentleman* an interesting account of the Channel Island selection and breeding as observed by himself while spending several weeks among the breeders.

After referring briefly to the history of the Guernsey and Jersey breeds, he draws the conclusion that the most practical dairy cow is one that weighs from 900 to 1,000 pounds. He has reached the conclusion that if dairymen with a lot of 1,200 to 1,500 pound cows will begin weeding out the poorest paying cows from their records of food consumed and produce, they will find as a rule the first to cull out are the largest cows.

The superior merit of the Island-bred cows is due, says Mr. Peer, to the practice of selecting and breeding on the principle of *individual merit*. The account given is as practiced on the Island of Jersey, it being the largest of the groups. These farmers are able to support themselves, live comfortably, largely feed their own population of 55,000, and the 40,000 to 50,000 visitors, and export from the little Island from \$3,000,000 to nearly \$4,000,000 worth of farm and garden produce yearly. This is an example of intensive farming from which Canada has something to learn. The Island is divided into eleven parishes, each having its spring and autumn shows, while in May or June the Island Society has what is called the "Island Show." The spring parish shows are for bulls only—yearlings and older. A bull to win a prize must be accompanied by his dam. Both the dam and the bull are scored, the first prize going to the bull whose score, added to that of his dam, foots the highest. In all these awards pedigree is not taken into account. Not one farmer in ten can tell the breeding of his cattle, so that if one wants to know the pedigree of a beast he has usually to consult the Island herd books. The winner at this show must stand in the parish for two years at a nominal fee. The prize is forfeited if he is sold before the expiration of the time. The result is that the first prize bull becomes the leading stock bull of the parish. Notice the result. If a farmer has say three bull calves dropped on his farm, he keeps only the one out of his very best cow and kills the others, because there is no use to take a bull to the show unless he has a high-class dam to accompany him, no matter how well he may be bred. This best cow has likely been driven to the parish stud bull. It will thus be seen that the selections are made entirely on the combined individual merit of the bull and his dam.

The system of entering an animal in the herd books is also purely on the ground of *individual merit*. When a calf is born the owner must go within thirty days to the secretary of the herd book and give a description, markings, etc., of the calf and date of birth. He then receives a paper, and record is made of the calf, but no herd-book number is given until the heifer or bull is approved by a committee. Bulls can receive their numbers as yearlings—their dams are shown with them—but heifers must wait until they have calved. Every six weeks three expert judges, the secretary of the herd book, and other officers start out on a tour of inspection. All the heifers that have dropped calves since the last inspection in that and adjoining parishes must be presented at a certain farm where the judges are advertised to be. Heifers for the herd book inspection are brought without their dams. They are carefully inspected one at a time, and if worthy receive a commended or highly commended card. It is observed that the heifer corresponds to the original description as given by the owner when she was a calf, and if so she is entered on the herd book of the Island Cattle Club and given a number. If they fail to pass this critical inspection (and quite a number do) no card is given and they cannot be recorded. Sometimes the daughters or granddaughters of champion cows, and sired by one of the best bulls, fail to get into the records because of some slight defect, such as a deficient forehead or the like. Should such a rejected cow produce a good enough heifer calf to pass inspection she would have to go in not as herd-book stock, but foundation stock, and that between the ages of two and three, and the owner must pay a fine of \$5 to get her on even then. It will be recognized that the greatest possible care is taken to keep the standard high, which course has had much to do in producing these superior breeds of special purpose dairy cattle.

Although the Channel Islanders are mostly entirely ignorant of all commonly observed principles of breeding, continues Mr. Peer, their method of selecting and breeding from individual merit is the only correct and highly scientific one to pursue. The solid color craze and pedigree craze have done much to deteriorate the Jerseys this side the Atlantic, especially in dairy form. As to dairy capa-

city, the American-bred Jerseys are above the Island cattle. The Islanders are so mortally afraid of milk fever, which is very prevalent there, that they do not feed anything like the quantity that is fed in the United States; besides, something like 75 per cent. of the cattle food is roots.

Another reason why the Island cattle, whatever they may be, are always genuine *dairy cattle* is the method of feeding. In this respect the Islanders are almost entirely ignorant from a technical standpoint, and unconscious of being scientific, but in this respect also, as in their farming and breeding, they are the most scientific, at least so far as feeding to produce dairy cows is concerned. Calves are taken from their dams the day of their birth or the one following. From one to four weeks skim milk gradually takes the place of whole milk, then they are given roots as soon as they will eat them. The writer feels warranted in saying that during the first year of the calf's life the diet is skim milk and roots; very little grain is ever fed. The calves are rough looking, bony and paunchy, but when they come into milk they are dairy cattle and no mistake.

Fortunately, the Islanders are contented to let the Englishmen grow their beef for them. An English farmer goes over to the Island and pays £50 or £100 for the best 2-year-old and raises a heifer calf from her. The more he pays for the cow the more certain he is to spoil the calf. He feeds the heifer a strong, fattening grain ration and the calf is born with more or less inclination to produce beef. The owner then proceeds to complete the calf's ruin for dairy purposes by feeding it all the new milk it will take, with oil meal and cooked grain added. She wins a prize with an English judge as a yearling and is twice the size of an Island calf of the same age, but when she comes fresh in milk she is a failure, comparatively, and the Englishman, when he wants a high-class cow, must go back to the Island and plank down another round sum for a heifer that as a calf came up on skim milk and roots.

POULTRY.

The Ontario Poultry Show.

The twenty-fourth annual exhibition of the Ontario Poultry Association, held in the City of London, proved to be the most successful both in quality and quantity of any yet held under the auspices of the Ontario Poultry Association. The management was first-class in every particular. One thing to note was the feeding and watering. Birds were not overfed, and on their arrival, when placed in their respective coops, only a small quantity of water was allowed each bird, as it should be, the effect of which was shown by the health of the birds during the entire exhibition. There was one mistake made in the cooping of the birds, in not placing them in rotation and on the same tier or level. The mixing up of the old and the young birds made it quite awkward for the judges, and in several varieties birds were overlooked when the judges were making their awards, necessitating extra work, as the classes effected had to be rejudged. We heard but few complaints about the comparison system of judging, as was adopted by the Association this year, instead of the scoring system, as has been the custom for several years in the past. Yet there are a great number of fanciers who yet prefer the latter method of judging, especially the amateurs, who wish to know the defects, if any, in the stock shown. Every class of standard bird was well represented at this show, and in all varieties there were birds not receiving a prize fit to win in strong competition. We noticed in the heavy varieties of fowl a marked improvement over last year so far as size and weight were concerned. We would certainly recommend to the officers of the Association the advisability of having all birds with weight clauses weighed, no matter whether the birds are to be judged by comparison or otherwise. The result will be if we continue to judge our shows without weight being taken into consideration the utility classes of fowl will decrease instead of increasing in size, as is so much desired. Color of plumage and shape will be the particular objects in view when selecting the birds for exhibition.

The specimens in the Asiatic class, not only in color of plumage but in size, were far ahead of any exhibit made in any former year at the Ontario Show. The Rocks also were well represented, and several birds not receiving a prize would be considered extra fine specimens. The Wyandottes in all varieties were out in full force, and it must have taken Judge Smith considerable time to decide where to place the tickets. Mr. Butterfield, who judged the Game class, said he never saw so many and such fine specimens in every variety shown as were placed on exhibition. Mr. L. G. Jarvis has judged the water fowl every year since the Ontario show was organized, and he claims the display made this year was certainly the largest and best ever made during that time. The exhibit in all varieties of turkeys was simply immense and was admired by all who availed themselves of the opportunity of seeing this great show. W. H. Beattie, Wilton Grove; W. E. Wright, Glanworth, and Andrew Elliott, Pond Mills, did well in these classes. The French classes, especially the Houdan variety, were the finest seen for years, and the competition very keen. The Polands were

the center of attraction, especially with the ladies, who admired the beautiful plumage and crests. London may be considered the home of the Poland, and Messrs. Bogue and McNeil, wherever they exhibit in that class, have never had to take second place. In Minorca the black variety particularly were very fine, and the winners in white also good. The Dorkings, that well-known class of fowl so much admired on the British markets, had some of the finest specimens in all varieties, and in several cases it was difficult to decide where to place the prize tickets. Time nor space will not permit at this time to give a full report of this the Crystal Palace Show of Canada.

Ontario Poultry Association.

The 24th annual meeting of the Ontario Poultry Association was held in London on Jan. 13th, being the 3rd day of the show. The President, Mr. Allan Bogue, in his opening address pointed out that the advance made by the Association within the last year was by far the greatest ever made in the same length of time. Rapid progress has been made ever since the Ontario Minister of Agriculture increased the grant to the Association. It was pointed out that birds of some breeds that can win prizes at this show can do so in any part of the world. The way for winning prizes is becoming harder and harder each year. This show found many new exhibitors in the field who are made of the right sort of stuff to lead.

Secretary Thos. A. Browne's report showed that for six years the entries have steadily increased. This year they number 1,899, against 1,622 in 1897. This great advance was considered largely due to the increased number of specials offered this year. It was recommended that the old method of having the essays read and discussed on the same day as the annual meeting be returned to. This grew out of an inability to hold a meeting to hear the essays because of lack of attendance. It was therefore finally resolved to dispose of both business and essays on the 3rd day of holding the show in future years. It was also resolved as the result of a recommendation of the Secretary that clerks assisting the judges and other employees be paid for their services and controlled by the Secretary and President.

Officers:—Hon. Pres., Geo. H. Bertram, M. P., Toronto; President, Dr. A. W. Bell, Toronto; 1st Vice President, Wm. McNeil, London; 2nd Vice President, M. T. Burn, Tilsonburg. Directors—D. C. True, Lindsay; Chas. Bonnick, Toronto; T. J. Senior, Hamilton; R. F. Webber, Guelph; T. H. Scott, St. Thomas; T. Brown, Durham; A. Bogue, London; E. Donnelly, Sandwich; J. W. Bell, Angus. Auditor, H. B. Donovan, Toronto. Delegates—To Industrial Fair, Toronto, Messrs. Jos. Dilworth and Wm. Barber; Western Fair, London, J. H. Saunders and Geo. McCormick; Hamilton, John Cole and Mr. Dickinson. Mr. Wm. McNeil, London, was appointed as delegate to the American Poultry Association meeting in Boston to invite their 1899 convention to Toronto, to be held during the Ontario Poultry Show.

Letters were read from the Hon. John Dryden, Minister of Agriculture for Ontario, and Hon. Sydney Fisher, Minister of Agriculture for the Dominion, expressing regret that they could not attend, but the latter gentleman was represented by Mr. A. T. Gilbert, superintendent of the Poultry Department at the Central Experimental Farm at Ottawa, who delivered an interesting address. After congratulating the Association on the success of the show, he pointed out what the Governments were doing for the poultry industry. The Legislature, by granting money to the Association, assists the development of pure-bred fowls. The Dominion Government, by opening up a cold storage transportation, has created a demand for pure-bred fowls, males especially, from which to produce dressed poultry fit to ship to Great Britain. Mr. Gilbert was pleased to notice that at the later large poultry shows there is less evidence of sacrificing utility qualities to feather markings. Plymouth Rocks, Leghorns and other breeds as shown to-day are larger birds and better layers than formerly. Size is especially wanted in fowls to ship to England. Mr. Gilbert referred to his missionary work through the Farmers' Institute system, from which he is noting gratifying results. He is seeing the scrub banished and better fowls taking its place. Mr. Gilbert exhibited at the show a table of poultry beautifully dressed, as it should be, for the English market. The turkeys, geese and chickens in this collection were purchased from farmers who had taken up poultry-keeping according to his teaching at Institute meetings. This collection was very much admired by the many visitors.

By the aid of a chart it was shown that the hens kept on the Central Farm are managed to lay most of their eggs in winter, when they command the highest price. Some 201 hens of some 12 various breeds laid in Jan., 1896, 1,469 eggs; in Feb., 1,411; March, 1,569; April, 1,934; May, 1,699; June, 897; July, 485; Aug., 240; Sept., 82; Oct., 73; Nov., 568, and in Dec., 1,468 eggs; a total for the year of 11,893 eggs. It was found from observation that only from 115 to 120 of the hens were active layers, and these had to support the entire flock, which returned for the year \$2 profit for each hen. This is largely done by supplying during the winter season as far as possible summer food and summer conditions. The food consists of ground green bone 1 pound to 16 hens three times a week, and for the

other four months crushed green bone. They are never deeply littered during the winter, that active getting of the eggs are checked to lay are effort is made as possible, later when h

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