Our School Department.

Judging Beef Calves.

MANY boys and girls have had some experience in showing calves at the school fall fairs, and perhaps some have been disappointed because they did not quite understand why another's calf was placed above their own. There is quite as much skill required to select the calf to win as there is in showing it. The one who can pick a winner from the calf herd, is likely to be a pretty good judge. It is necessary to know what will win before attempting to show animals. In order that young exhibitors and those who intend to exhibit next year may have some idea as to what is required in the likely winner, we are going to briefly describe the desirable points in beef and dairy calves. The latter will be left for a future issue, and we shall here set down a few points that distinguish a good beef calf from a poor one.

In judging beef calves, one must have the picture of a good beef animal uppermost in his mind. Beef animals are quite different from dairy cattle. The latter are wedge-shaped, because that conformation is best for milk production. The butcher's animal is rectangular, that is he is straight in his lines, thick through the body at the top and bottom and wide in front and behind. Stand back and look at a good beef animal and you will observe that the top line, or the back, is practically straight from a little in front of the shoulders right back to the tail-head; so is the underline, and a calf which is "cut up" or high in the flank (that is the portion just ahead of the hind leg) has not good lines or conformation. Standing in front or behind the animal you will observe that it is broad or thick through. The thighs should be thickly fleshed and the flesh carried well down to the hocks. In general appearances, too, the animal should be low-set, that is, with short legs. The reasons for what we have said are these: A blocky, rectangular animal carries the greatest wealth of fleshing on the most expensive parts. Shoulder, neck and belly cuts are the least expensive because they are the least desirable. A well-grown, low-set animal indicates early maturity, which all cattle raisers are striving for, and the blocky, thick fellow is likely a "good doer," that is one which puts on flesh with the minimum of feed.

After this general observation has been made, feel of the calf along the back, on the ribs and on the shoulder points. Deep fleshing is required, and it must be smoothly laid on. Sometimes animals are patchy or the flesh rolls up on their ribs. This is undesirable and the reason is that butchers find that patchy animals do not dress out a large percentage of good meat; there is too much offal or waste.

Quality, too, is a very important point. Lift the skin up between the thumb and fingers and see if it is thick and harsh, or fairly thin and velvety to the touch. The latter denotes good quality; the former indicates harshness or lack of quality. On top of all these we must have development or growth, and we need not tell you the reason for this. The points we have covered so far are conformation, quality, fleshing, and development.

There is another phase of the question that now must be considered. Suppose we are selecting these animals, which are either male or female calves, to be put into a herd for breeders. We must then go further than the four points and look for good constitution. When an animal is thin through the body, just back of the fore legs, and not very deep there, we would say that it has a poor consitution. When the body is deep thick through and very full just back of the shoulders, that indicates a good, strong constitution. Animals with poor constitution are likely to be weak, subject to diseases, not very good producers, and all around less desirable than the animal with a strong constitution. Then in the breeding animal there must be character, which is slightly different in Shorthorns, Aberdeen-Angus, Herefords, or any beef animals you may choose. Space will not permit us here to describe the character of these different breeds, but in them all you will find an expression and a countenance that indicates character or the lack of it. In pure-bred animals we must see that they conform to breed type and furthermore, males must be masculine in appearance and the heifers must be feminine.

We have not described all the points to look for in judging beef calves, neither have we given full reasons why the ones mentioned should be observed. These, young judges can find out from breeders and from their parents, but anyone interested in beef calves to the extent of exhibiting them, or studying them, should bear these following points in mind: conformation, quality, fleshing, development, constitution, character, and breed type.

In a future article we shall tell you a few things about judging dairy calves.

Watch for the Corn Borer!

IN some parts of Ontario, particularly Elgin and Welland Counties, the European Corn Borer has become very common and a very serious pest indeed. Farmers are alarmed, and the Dominion Entomological Branch, at Ottawa, has several men going through the country trying to find out how widespread this outbreak is. Scouts are looking in farmers' corn fields for the borer, and while it has only yet been found in Southwestern Ontario, it may become a menace or a very bad pest in other districts if it is not suppressed. School teachers, in corn growing districts, would do well to write to the Entomological Branch, Department of Agriculture, Ottawa, for illustrations showing what the European Corn Borer is like and how it works. Then they and the school children could be on the watch for it and perhaps detect it before farmers were aware of its presence in their crops.

The little larvae of the corn borer cuts a small hole through the husks of the cob and burrows right into the centre of the ear of corn. It does not confine itself, though, to the cob, for it lives and works in the stalk, and wherever it is working it throws out fine borings or dustlike material. When it is working in the cob, the ear of corn frequently hangs over, just as corn does when it is nearing maturity. A further description of the pest appeared in last week's issue.

The European Corn Borer works while the corn is in the shock, just as it does in standing corn. If any teachers or pupils observe the European corn borer in their neighborhood, it would be well for them to report it to the Agricultural Representative, or to the Department of Agriculture at Ottawa.

Many valuable and useful arithmetical problems can be constructed from measurement of the school grounds, computing the distance of the school from the pupils' homes, ascertaining how many miles they travel when going to school for a month or year, etc. These local problems are more interesting than the stereotyped ones found in books, and there is no scarcity of them in any community.

An apple-naming contest would be both interesting and instructive. Many children know the varieties growing in the orchards at their own homes, but there are kinds of apples growing just across the road that they do not know at all. The names of varieties would also make a good spelling lesson and quite as useful as many now in the curriculum.

Have the pupils collect various insects in the pupa stage and preserve the collection till spring, when the adults will emerge much to the amazement and edification of the young entomologists in the school. Observe the same plan in regard to the eggs of insects.

A bird-lover derives a great deal of pleasure watching the departure of migrating birds and their return again in the spring. Most children are bird-lovers and would be interested in this phase of nature.

This is a splendid time of year to make a collection of weed seeds.