

# The Farming World

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## Live Stock Judging from the Learner's Point of View

**L**ive stock judging as well as other exhibits at the autumn shows the educational feature should not be lost sight of. The great mass of farmers and farmers' sons who annually attend these fairs go there to learn something. It may be to find out the best type of cow for dairy purposes, the best kind of animal for the beef cattle trade, or perhaps the type of hog best suited to the bacon trade and so on. No doubt the majority of the farmers who visit the fairs, generally speaking, know the breeds of cattle adapted to dairy purposes and also those best suited to the beef trade. But this is not sufficient. To become an expert dairyman or a successful producer of beef cattle the farmer must know the individual animal best suited to either of these purposes. The great lack in the country today, especially in connection with the development of our export cattle and bacon trades, is that the average farmer is not sufficiently familiar with the individual types of animals required for successfully pursuing these lines to make proper selections when he goes to buy. Very often an animal of one of the so-called beef breeds or a hog of one of the recognized bacon breeds is purchased without any regard to the individual qualities of either with the hope that successful results will follow. These not being forthcoming in a measure in which he has been led to expect, the purchaser becomes discouraged, reverts back to the old order of things and naturally concludes that pure-bred stock is not what it is cracked up to be.

In the face of this condition of affairs it may well be asked if the methods of awarding prizes at our fall fairs are best suited to educating our people as to the types of animals required for successfully developing the beef cattle, bacon, or mutton trades as the case may be. If they are not, they are very much lacking in one essential and important feature. No doubt an exhibit of show cattle well brought out, no matter what the methods of judging are, has a certain educational value, which is all right as far as it goes. But this is not enough. It is possible to so judge the exhibits of live stock at every fair as to make it a great educational factor along the lines we have indicated. Where this is not done our exhibitions fail in one essential feature, and lose a splendid opportunity for making their influence felt upon the community for good. But are the present methods of judging, and those which have been practised for the past few years, the best that could be adopted for educational purposes along the lines we have indicated. From careful observation during the past few years of their working and effect upon the onlooker we

are led to the conclusion that they are not. But if they do not fill the bill, what is the remedy? We recognize the difficulty. It is very often much easier to find fault than it is to suggest methods of improvement.

However this may be, there are one or two particulars in which present methods are lacking, and which we think are capable of being improved upon. In present methods of judging there is a great lack of uniformity and system. There is no definite plan laid down for judging in the different classes. The exhibitor, when he brings an animal into the ring, cannot rely upon any systematic plan being followed in making the awards. If there is a new judge a new method is usually followed, and too often a new type put forward just as it suits the training and experience of the judge. In this way the onlooker sees one type of animal put forward as the ideal one year, and the next year some different type, and he goes away somewhat muddled as to what is the ideal, and which is the animal he should take as his model if he desires to make a purchase. Of course the judge is not always to blame in the matter. He is put there to do the best he can according to his ability and training, and it is only right to say that the majority of those who judge at our larger fairs are fair and honest in their methods. But this is not the point at issue. The question is, what effect has such a variation in methods or lack of system upon the learner, who is endeavoring to find out what is the ideal type of any particular class?

Not only is there a lack of uniformity in the methods followed year by year at one exhibition, but there is hardly any uniformity at all as between the methods of awarding prizes at one large fair and those of another held the following week. For instance, it frequently happens that an animal awarded first prize at the Industrial will, the following week, be put down to second or even third place at the London Fair. What is the onlooker to do in such a case—and we are discussing this question entirely from the onlooker or learner's point of view? Is he to take the first prize animal at Toronto or at London as his ideal? Are both right or are both wrong? These are questions which we will leave our readers to answer.

All this variation comes from lack of uniformity or system in methods of judging. To overcome this, would it not be possible for our exhibition associations to co-operate, and adopt some standard or type for each breed or class, to be used as a guide by the judge in making the awards? This would necessitate the use of a score card, which, in our opinion, would be a distinct advantage in many cases. And if upon this score card a photograph or diagram of the ideal type of animal for each breed or class could be given, it would greatly assist in bringing about more uniform methods in judging.