

FARM AND DAIRY & RURAL HOME



We Welcome Practical Progressive Ideas.
Trade increases the wealth and glory of a country; but its real strength and stamina are to be looked for among the cultivators of the land.—Lord Chatham.

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Thirty Years of Herd Improvement Work And Something of What Dairying Has Done for Jas. Hotson, Oxford Co., Ont.—By F. E. Ellis

CAN milk be produced profitably at \$1 a cwt.? No government official, even if he be a real expert dairymen and have a high-class government herd with which to work, has ever yet been able to do it. No system of business accounting will leave a balance on the right side of the dairyman's ledger, if milk must be marketed at such a price. "Yes, I know it," admitted Jas. Hotson, "but some way or other those figures don't nick in well with our experience. How do you explain Oxford county?"

Oxford county has been made the rich agricultural district that it is by the dairy cow and the cheese factory. The milk that has made the farmers prosperous was not sold as a fancy certified product at a price that only the rich can afford to pay, or even at a slight advance for city consumption. There are no large cities in Oxford county and none very near. Prosperity came with the cheese factory and prices running from 60 cts. to \$1 a cwt.

The Transformation of Oxford

"I can remember this section of the country," Jas. Hotson told me, "when farm after farm was doing anything. Then the cheese factories started. Mortgages began to be paid off. The price averaged about 80 cts. a cwt., but that does not tell the whole story. The whey was sent home and hogs began to be popular on the farms. Years ago there were no hogs shipped from Innerkip. Now shipments leave every two weeks. Farmers who previously did not ship six hogs in a year, now ship 30, 40 and even 60 hogs. This has been made possible by whey, the by-product of the cheese factory. Home grains are combined with this whey, but none of us have enough for all purposes. We are all buying feed. As a result of this system of farming, our farms to-day are peopled with substantial, progressive men."

Mr. Hotson himself is a splendid example of the "substantial, progressive" type of farmer that is the pride of Oxford county. I first became acquainted with Mr. Hotson some five years ago, through the excellent work he was doing in improving his herd, through the cow testing system advocated by Mr. C. F. Whitley. Early this spring I dropped off at Innerkip to spend the day with Mr. Hotson on his own farm.



A Colonial Verandah Has Been Added to the Substantial Stone House. And this is only one of the minor improvements that Jas. Hotson has made on his Oxford county dairy farm. All have been made possible by good dairy methods, with good dairy cows. Why not read of his 30 years of herd building and progress in the article *Adjoining?*—Photo by an Editor of Farm and Dairy.

The scrap of conversation given above, explains Mr. Hotson's firm belief in dairying. He is one of those who have prospered by following dairy farming during the last three decades. His dairy herd has seldom exceeded 18 to 20 cows, but they have been good ones. He is one of the few men of the district who turns off three score of pigs a year.

30 Years of Herd Improvement

The one factor that, above all others, explains Mr. Hotson's success as a dairymen, is the high standard of production that he has maintained in his herd. It was away back in 1884, just 30 years ago, that Mr. Hotson first started to raise the standard of his cows. He then had a scrub herd, a mixture of all kinds. Shorthorns were the leading breed of the district and the majority of the sires used were of no breed whatever. It was in that year, 1884, just shortly after he had started farming for himself, that Mr. Hotson purchased his first pure-bred sire, a Holstein. For 22 years he bred consistently for higher milk production and at the end of that time found himself with one of the most productive herds in the district. Then he started in to weed as well as breed. He joined the cow testing association and began to weigh and test the milk from each individual cow in the herd on three days of each month. This work has been continued for eight years.

Four years ago a representative of the Walkerville Farms, buying high-class Holstein grade cows in Oxford county, found just the kind he

wanted in Mr. Hotson's stables and took seven of them. This gave Mr. Hotson an excellent opportunity to branch out into pure-bred and registered cattle. He purchased three good females and, having exceptional luck in securing heifer calves, the natural increase has been such that his herd—is now evenly divided between pure-bred and grade Holsteins. Eventually the herd will be pure-bred entirely.

Grades That Excel in Production

But is it to be wondered that Mr. Hotson is loathe to part with the strain of grades that he has been developing for 30 years? To all intents and purposes, his grades are pure-bred cattle, the foreign blood being now only a small fraction of one per cent; and they are high-class producers. Here is an example. A 30 months' old heifer freshened in November, 1914, and in the next seven months produced 6,700 lbs. of milk. When she went on grass last spring, she immediately came up in her flow again and promises to produce between 9,000 and 10,200 lbs. of milk in her first lactation period and freshen within the twelve months. Few pure-bred heifers can make a better showing than this.

A two-year-old pure-bred heifer in Mr. Hotson's herd freshened Oct. 23rd, and in November milked 1,115 lbs., and for the next few months her production ran as follows: 1,000 lbs.; 995 lbs.; 1,060 lbs.; 970 lbs.; 960 lbs., and so on. Both of these heifers were well fed, but no attempt was made to push them for heavy milk production. It would seem that there is little to choose between the pure-bred and the grade animals in this herd, judged from the production standpoint alone.

Mature Cows Average 8,000 Lbs.

These are only two of the many good individuals in the herd. An average of all the mature cows owned in the last four or five years would run around 8,000 lbs. of milk a cow. One cow for instance, which had just completed her lactation period shortly before my visit to Mr. Hotson, had produced 10,230 lbs. of milk and 326.76 lbs. of butter-fat in the year. Another cow that freshened on Jan. 21, 1914, produced 9,749 lbs. of milk and freshened again in November of the same year. For the next five months she averaged very

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