

FARM AND DAIRY

& RURAL HOME

Issued
Each Week

Only \$1.00
a Year

Vol. XXIX.

FOR WEEK ENDING APRIL 14, 1910.

No. 15

A BRIEF STUDY OF COW CHARACTERISTICS

George Rice, Oxford Co., Ont.

The Conclusions of an Expert, Gained from Close Observations of the Cow While at Work—The Results of an Interesting Experiment.

Animals and birds have habits and traits peculiar to their nature. Some of these can be developed but we cannot graft on something altogether foreign to their nature. The rooster likes to strut about and crow. (In that respect he is not unlike the human tribe). The drake

likes to go for a quiet swim if there is water to be had. If these would change this procedure it would at least be interesting. Much of the trouble that people make for themselves is because they want to do something not according to what nature intended. This is all too true of dairy cows. It has often been mentioned that some people have better success with one class of stock than with another. This is because they take more interest in



Mr. Geo. Rice

that stock and study its traits.

To illustrate, I have been fairly successful with cattle and some other stock but I never had any success with hens. I never had time to pay much attention to their wants and although like other people who share twice a week and wash on the other days and look as pleasant as possible, her ladyship, the hen had no use for me. Never an egg will the hen lay in winter, unless she is cared for right.

A STUDY OF HENS

Having more time at my disposal and possessing a tooth for hen fruit, I have this past winter been following the practice of men that get eggs in winter. I haven't much faith in the methods of those who tell how to get winter eggs but do not get any themselves. In this as in other things, an ounce of successful practice is worth a ton of theories. Some theories are like a horse with the spring halt. They look all right, but have a decided limp when in action.

After following closely and faithfully the methods of successful winter egg producers, I gathered the fruits (hen fruit) of my endeavor and I find that the way to the egg basket is via her ladyship's gizzard. It is astonishing what she can put into her gizzard. It is just the same in handling cows for winter milk production. The more closely we study and follow her natural bent, the greater our success.

A DAY WITH A COW

Let us follow a cow through a day's work. What shall we give her first? Water? No. She won't drink, that is not her way. She wants feed first. Give her a little hay. She relishes that and whilst you milk she will be happy and contented. Then give her a good feed of ensilage with some meal on it. How she enjoys it! Next course will be some sugar mangels. Surely with all this succulent food, she will not want any water. But try her and see how mistaken you are in your theory.

She just does want water after she eats her fill and not later, because she wants to get at work on this food and turn it into something that will eventually fill the milk pail. She cannot get to work until she has all the material, and water is essential. Now perhaps she lies down or it may be she stands up; anyway you think she is at rest. You are quite wrong. Contradictory as it may seem, a cow works the hardest when she is apparently doing nothing. Watch her now whilst she is chewing her cud. She does this not for enjoyment alone; she has all the coarse food to work up into a finer product, the finest product mankind can obtain and a product used by most of us from the cradle to the grave.

"Milk for men, milk for ladies,
Milk that is good for little babies."

Watch her now. We know what she has consumed in food and water, but there is another element necessary to the elaboration of this product we call milk. If the stable is not very warm and even if it is, we will see, though not quite

Most Practical Information

The second annual Dairy Number of Farm and Dairy is a dandy. The information it contains is of a most practical nature. This issue alone is worth several times the subscription price for a year. I would not think of doing without Farm and Dairy.—T. R. James, Middlesex Co., Ont.

so plainly, the cow throwing off great clouds of "steam," we will call it. When she has "steam" up she is at full work. How much does she throw off! We are not particular what becomes of it so long as it gets away as it is used up; what is left is of no use to the cow. We are more concerned as to what is to take its place. We cannot see the air she breathes in but we can judge of its volume by what she is expelling and she must take in as much as that.

THE VALUE OF PURE AIR

It makes all the difference in the world whether or not this air is pure, because the purer the air she breathes, the more of these elements it contains that are so necessary to digest the food. It is really through the working of the lungs that the cow derives sustenance from her food. This is a point that cannot be too strongly emphasized. Air to the cow is like the draft to a fire under a boiler. The elements derived from the air make the fire burn better and there is better combustion. At a town waterworks, they built a higher and bigger chimney to get a better draft and they were then able to obtain much more heat from the same quantity of coal. The case is even stronger and more aids with a cow.

Pure air aids digestion. It oxidizes the blood. It makes the blood purer and circulation more vigorous. It feeds and stimulates the nerves, and

good dairy cows have a good deal of "nerve". A cow must have pure air if she is to do the best work she is capable of and be up to her capacity in other respects. A cow breathes in the most air when she is quiet and remasticating her food. She has no air receptacles in which to store up air, like food in her stomach. She cannot retain the air in her lungs for very long, so it is essential that she have good air all the time. There is little use turning a cow out to "get some fresh air" if it is cold. We have got to have the air inside during our winters.

EXERCISE UNNECESSARY

It seems a little strange that a cow more than any other animal can do without exercise. Really she works harder standing and digesting her food than a horse would do plowing. Cows when producing heavily will often sweat while standing perfectly still. It is well known that when cows have to go too far to pasture, they do not do so well. A cow carries much weight in various stages of digestion (about 10 lbs.) and she was never intended for a churn.

We see therefore that the essentials to milk production are food, water and air. The last two are quite as important as the first. Essential as they are, they do not receive the attention that their importance demands. A cow invariably wants drink after eating. What about after the night meal? What are her chances to satisfy the demand of her nature? If she has to go without water for 12 hours or more, then the milk yield must suffer and her whole digestive system be thrown out of gear as it were.

I only milked three cows this last winter, but I gave them as good care as I could. I was punctual to the minute with the feed and water. If they wanted for anything, all they had to do was to wink and they had it and as a result they were punctual with the milk, giving me enough to net \$20 a month each.

THE DIFFERENCE

I had to go away on three different occasions. I left a man in charge to attend them. I told him exactly what to feed. Next day however, the cows were down on their yield. This happened twice. The third time, I was away. I went to the stable at 9 p.m. and gave the cows, two pails of water each. The yield was all right the next day. I have not put in the water basins yet but have seen that the cows get water after they have all the feed they want. The man was in a hurry to get away as soon as the six o'clock bell rang. They would not drink before feeding and did not get a chance after. The result was, no water, no milk, not only the next day but for some time after.

The shrinkage of the milk yield as the milk period advances is due more to the lack of care in supplying water and pure air than to the advancement of the lactation time. These cows, though fresh in September are now giving as much per day as they did in October when I brought them home and they have not been out of the stable once since the 20th of October. If they got out, they would run a mile they are feeling so good, but more about this little experiment later.