

The Farm Page



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THE SELLING OF FARM LIVESTOCK

The channels through which the farmer can dispose of his surplus live stock have increased very rapidly within the past four or five years and with this change there has come likewise a desirable element of competition among buyers of live stock. It has been generally felt by the farmers in the past that the price they should receive for their products was entirely out of their control and that very often an effort to produce in large volume reacted unfavorably instead of favorably to the farmer. This used to be true particularly of primal products like grain but this has been changed to a considerable degree.

In the case of live stock the changes are just being made now. There is no business with respect to which there has been larger organization than with respect to the meat business. The packing houses represent a very strong centralization of capital. The business in most respects is comparatively simple and it is not difficult to secure organization in this activity.

Usually with the institution of packing concerns at any point they have been the direct purchasers of live stock from producers. When a man ships a car of hogs to a packing plant it is not hard to guess with whom the advantage rests in the buying-selling event. The situation does not look good to the farmer until he can get into open selling services represented by public stock yards such as we now have in Alberta at points like Edmonton and Calgary. The fact that there are not a lot of these in the Province is not really a disadvantage to the farmer because local organizations have been formed for the assembling of stock and the stock reaches these large centres in the end in any case. The farmer now is favored with a condition by which he can place his stuff by consignment on large central sales yards and have it disposed of under competition. The Edmonton Stock Yards for example have buyers from Eastern Canada, Winnipeg and from likewise the local packers, the latter generally buying through agents.

Stocker Cattle
There is a good deal said nowadays about the desirability of having live stock finished properly before putting it on the market. This is sound theory and practice as well. It means the concentration of products and means the investment of labor for which the farmer should get paid. On the other hand labor is pretty scarce in Alberta and feeding enterprises are not carried on with the same kind of care and intensity that they are in better established agriculture. There is, however, a large supply of natural grass which will carry a good deal of live stock and this can be utilized properly in the growing of young animals. It is a legitimate source of profit for the farmer and for the homesteaders just beginning to have for market cattle for other people to feed if he is not in a position to feed them himself. The open stock yards furnish a good market for stocker cattle and likewise afford good opportunities for the securing of stocker cattle by people who want them.

Pure-Bred Cattle
There has been a great advance in the last four or five years in the selling of pure-bred stock. The demand for commercial cattle has inaugurated the founding of good herds of stock chiefly of the beef breeds. There have been a lot of good cattle imported from Eastern Canada and the United States and those who have herds started have been steadily increasing them. This has gone on to such an extent as to make surplus cattle available for those who are looking for them and with this condition selling agencies have been devised to distribute these cattle. Alberta is becoming well known for its public live stock sales. There are very large and important sales of bulls and female stock at the spring fairs in both Edmonton and Calgary and there are likewise sheep and swine sales in the fall at the same places as well as at Lacombe and Lethbridge. In addition to this

there are a great many private sales usually arranged co-operatively among breeders two or more in number. Recently what is called a congress sale was held at Brandon to which Alberta breeders made a large contribution. The Minister of Agriculture furnished about a dozen head of cattle to this sale and one of his animals topped the sale. She was a yearling heifer and brought \$3100.00. The congress sale has a very distinct advantage for the seller of surplus stock because if the selection of stock is good and fairly large the assembling of buyers will be correspondingly large and prices will be comparatively strong. There is always a chance at the congress sale for the good ones to bring good prices. The discrimination of the big crowd has right relation to quality.

FARM SURVEY OF PAST YEAR

Report Issued by Dominion Bureau Shows Increase in All Rural Wealth

The Dominion Bureau of Statistics publishes its annual report on average farm values for the year 1918, consisting of estimates of (1) the value of farm land; (2) of the wages paid for farm help; and (3) the value of farm live stock and of wool. These estimates have been compiled from the returns of the numerous crops of crop correspondents throughout Canada.

Average Values of Farm Lands
According to the returns received, the average value of farm land for the Dominion, including both improved and unimproved land, together with dwelling houses, barns, stables and other farm buildings, is \$46 per acre, as compared with \$44 in 1917, 41 in 1916, 40 in 1915 and \$38 in 1914. By provinces, the value is highest in British Columbia, viz., \$149, this being exactly the same figure as in 1917. The higher value per acre in this province is due to orcharding and fruit-growing. Quebec and Ontario have the same average value per acre, viz., \$57, the average for 1917 in Quebec being, however, \$53, whilst in Ontario it was \$55. In Prince Edward Island the value is 44 as in 1917; in Nova Scotia it is \$36 against \$34; in New Brunswick \$35 against \$29; in Manitoba \$32 against \$31; in Saskatchewan \$29 against \$26, and in Alberta \$28 against \$27.

Average Wages of Farm Help
The average wages paid for farm help in 1918 show a substantial increase as compared with the previous year, and are again the highest on record. For the whole of Canada, the average wages per month of farm help during the summer, inclusive of board, are for males, \$70 as compared with \$64 in 1917, and for females \$38 as compared with \$34. For the complete year, including board the wages averaged for males \$617 and for females \$416, as compared with \$611 and \$364 respectively in 1917. The average value of board per month is \$21 for males and \$17 for females, as against \$19 and \$15 in 1917. Compared by province, the average wages per month for male and female help, respectively, in the summer season, including board, were in 1918 in order of value as follows: British Columbia \$69 and \$57; Alberta \$86 and \$50; Saskatchewan \$6 and \$49; Manitoba \$78 and \$45; New Brunswick \$69 and \$31; Quebec \$65 and \$33; Ontario \$62 and \$35; Nova Scotia \$60 and \$30; Prince Edward Island \$46 and \$25.

Values of Farm Live Stock
Horses show little difference in value as compared with 1917; but the value of all descriptions of horned cattle has again increased. The prices of sheep are also higher, but swine are somewhat less. For the Dominion as a whole, horses under one year average in price \$56 as against \$57 in 1917, for horses one year to under three years the average is \$112 against \$116, and for horses three years and over the value is \$162 against \$167. Milch cows are \$87 against \$84; cattle under one year are \$25 against \$24; cattle from one year to under three years old are \$57 against \$52 and cattle three years old and over are \$88 against \$77. Sheep average \$16 against \$15 and swine per 100 lb. live weight are \$16 against \$17. The average value of wool per lb. is 62 cents for unwashed, as compared with 59 cents and for washed 80 cents as compared with 75 cents.

Correspondents were requested to report as nearly as possible the average value per head of each description of farm animal, and the averages compiled from the returns received have been used for the calculation of total values according to the number of farm animals as returned last June. The resulting total values for the Dominion are as follows, the totals for 1918 being given in brackets for comparison: Horses \$459,155,000 (\$429,123,000); milch cows \$307,244,000 (\$274,081,000); other cattle \$398,814,000, (\$370,595,000); total cattle \$706,058,000, (\$644,676,000); sheep \$48,802,000 (\$35,576,000); swine \$112,751,000 (\$92,886,000).

SAYS CALGARY REPORT INCORRECT

In a recent issue of the Western Labor News, Jas. Somerville of Calgary writes to that paper as follows:
The report of the Western Labor Conference contained in supplement and purporting to be a verbatim report is just received and after reviewing same I desire to make a brief statement as a matter of privilege in your next issue.
I spoke to the convention on one occasion only and upon rising expressed the opinion that there was an evident disposition throughout both the convention of the B.C. Federation and the Western conference to dispose of serious questions raised, either by ridiculing or forcing those expressing them into the position of being opposed to industrial unionism.

Whether the secretary is directly responsible or the failure to correctly record can be traced to over zealousness on the part of the official stenographer to serve those who engaged him I do not propose to say, but it is all too evident, too recording of what I did say from the start to finish was done not alone for the purpose of subjecting the speaker to ridicule but in particular to prevent the rank and file from obtaining an intelligent understanding of what was said in opposition to the motion before the house. I lay no claims to great fluency of speech but I think I can and do express common sense when occasion requires.

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