

The Farmer's Advocate AND HOME MAGAZINE.

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DOMINION.

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in the milk than when they are up feeding. Milk, too, is generally richest in fat when drawn after the shortest period between milkings.

True, it is possible to produce an abnormal test, but it is done by underfeeding and not by overfeeding. A dairy cow may be fed up until she is quite fat during her rest just previous to the commencement of her lactation period, and then, by cutting down her feed during the first weeks or month of her milking period, it is possible to increase the test in some cases up to nine or ten per cent fat. Underfeeding throws the cow upon herself for support and drawing on her body fat forces up the fat test. But this is not feeding fat into milk as it is generally understood. This is "faking," and the cause of much complaint against the short-term test. There is a point in it however—have your cows in good condition when freshening. The opinion of the man who believes that he can increase the percentage fat in milk is always based on better feeding, not upon underfeeding. His better feeding is done under normal conditions. There is nothing abnormal about feeding four pounds of meal per 100 pounds of milk given instead of two pounds per 100 pounds, and there will be no difference in the test as a direct result of this change. There may result more milk and consequently more fat at the same test. Replacing timothy hay with alfalfa hay of high quality would increase the milk flow, but would not appreciably affect the percentage of fat in the milk. During the first month or so of a lactation period the cow usually fails in flesh, and the result is a higher than normal test in her milk. Then for a period of several weeks or months, varying with different cows, the milk flow is quite constant, provided the feed is constant in amount and quality and the percentage of fat is, on the average, constant regardless of feed. Then as the cow commences to "dry up"

the percentage fat may increase a little. Everyone knows that "strippings" are rich.

It has been found that "the making of milk is largely completed just at the time of milking." A cow giving ten quarts of milk at a milking has not in her udder just before milking one quart of milk in the form that we know milk. The final secretion is brought about by the action of nerves, stimulated by the milkers, so the milker has an influence upon both the quality and quantity of milk given, more of course upon the latter than upon the former. The quantity of milk given is very largely a matter of the individuality of the cow, and the quality of it is almost entirely so. Scare your cows, dog them, injure them and all the feed in the world will not keep their milk flow up to normal, and the fat content will also suffer. Be kind, gentle, considerate and milk carefully and fast and the flow and percentage fat will increase, the former appreciably, the latter slightly, and will remain the same over an average length of time. Fat can not be fed into milk under normal conditions.

The Weakness of Partisan Newspapers.

Jerusalem was once, it is said, preserved a Spotless Town by every citizen keeping his own door-step clean. Papers, as a rule, are sufficiently occupied minding their own affairs, without undertaking to act as censors upon the conduct of other publishers. But the press, as a public agency, is properly amenable to commendation or censure. Here and there, giant figures among men may be the chief human factors in shaping the world's affairs, but newspapers prepare the soil from which events grow. They foment strife or promote peace, cater to what is base or cultivate things of good report, excuse graft or compel political crooks to clean up and quit just in proportion to the vigor and capacity with which their journalistic purposes and policies are carried out. It would be an ill thing for the press were it not amenable to the judgment of others. Newspapers are to be greatly benefited by the independent comment of readers and on-lookers, and nothing is more wholesome for a certain class of politicians and their hangers-on than for party papers to plainly "talk out in the meeting." Instead of losing they would gain in prestige. Is it to be wondered that editorial influence wanes to the vanishing point when day after day to read the heading is to foresee precisely what the article will say? Or, if one day, by a burst of candor, independent strictures are made, the party whip cracks and next morning the paper promptly "swallows itself." It is idle to talk about shooting thievish contractors, or hanging them as they propose to do in Austria, and then smooth it all over in the next issue. The Prussian press has been held up to scorn for being the tools or mouthpieces of military autocrats and armament makers, but possibly some of the breed akin might be found nearer home. If there is something to say, say it plainly, before elections as well as after and repeat it if need be. Play the game for the people, and small fry politicians will soon fall in line. Real statesmen will welcome such journalistic allies, and the party press will secure to itself a place in public esteem that it is very liable to lose.

A case in point was the appearance some time ago of the chief editor of the New York Times, Chas. A. Miller, before a United States Senate investigation committee. The pet Ship Purchase Bill of the Wilson administration, designed for the buying of interned German vessels, had been defeated and some Congressmen wanted to know why? The implication in calling editors and others to the Washington inquisition, in the case of the powerful New York Times—by the way an old and staunch friend of President Wilson—was that it had been "influenced" by British gold or by the big shipping interests, an insinuation which Mr. Miller indignantly dispelled. He reminded the committee that the attempt to discipline the American press and reduce it to the sycophantic institution that the press occupies in some central European countries, where it crawls to the foreign office and Government officials every day to get its orders, would fail. He protested against any attempted censorship of editorial opinion on public questions, as subversive of the freedom of the press and the liberties of the people. In publicity and free discussion there is safety for the people in Canada as well as in the United States, and it will be a good thing for Europe and the world if one outcome of the war be a death blow to the reptile press.

Nature's Diary.

A. B. Klugh, M.A.

Among the birds which have recently arrived from the south is a species which makes its presence known by a vocal performance which not even the most sympathetic, springtime imagination can grace by the name of a song. The male Bronzed Grackle takes up a perch high in a tree, inflates his chest, spreads his tail feathers, stretches up his head and gives forth—a squeak like that of an un-oiled wheelbarrow. The Bronzed Grackle is often termed the Crow Blackbird. It is about thirteen inches in length, black with brassy-green iridescence over most of the body and with steel-blue and purple reflections on the head and neck. The bill is long and curved.

In Newfoundland, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island the Bronzed Grackle is rare, but from New Brunswick and Quebec to the Rockies it is very common as a summer resident, in wooded parts of the country. In Muskoka and Parry Sound Districts it is a common breeding species, and is found sparingly even as far north as Hudson's Bay.

The bronzed Grackle builds its nest in many very different situations. The most common site is on a branch of some coniferous tree, but some nests are placed in deciduous trees, in bushes, on rafters and beams in barns, in deserted woodpecker's holes and in old stumps. The nest is composed of twigs, grass and mud and is lined with fine grass and sometimes with hair. The eggs are from four to six in number, smoky blue in color, with irregular dark brown blotches, lines and spots. The period of incubation is from thirteen to sixteen days. They nearly always breed in colonies, sometimes small, sometimes large, and when a colony is established in a clump of trees they persecute and drive away all other birds.

As soon as the young are strong on the wing the Grackles gather in large flocks, together with Redwings and Cowbirds. These flocks which sometimes aggregate 50,000 individuals are extremely destructive in grain-fields and corn-fields. In October they leave for the south and winter in the southern States.

The economic position of the Bronzed Grackle requires careful consideration. In Canada we are concerned only with its food from April till October. In April its diet consists in the main of:—Beneficial Insects 6%, Injurious Insects 17%, Grain 57%, Weedseed 6%, and Mast 9%. In May of Beneficial Insects 8%, Injurious Insects 47%, Grain 30%, and Mast 3%. In June of Beneficial Insects 13%, Injurious Insects 63%, Grain 29%, Cultivated Fruit 6%, and Mast 2%. In July of Beneficial Insects 11%, Injurious Insects 42%, Grain 40%, and Cultivated Fruit 10%. In August of Beneficial Insects 9%, Injurious Insects 38%, Grain 49%, Cultivated Fruit 9%. In September of Beneficial Insects 3%, Injurious Insects 13%, Grain 54%, Weedseed 2%, and Mast 19%. In October of Beneficial Insects 3%, Injurious Insects 9%, Grain 52%, Mast 15%, Weedseed 11%. These are the percentages for the above months which were found in a large series of stomachs examined by the Bureau of Biological Survey, and looking over this list we see that the Bronzed Grackle does both good and harm; good in destroying injurious insects and weedseed, harm in eating grain, and cultivated fruit and in consuming insects which are beneficial because they prey upon injurious forms. We notice that the percentage of grain eaten is very high; much of this grain is undoubtedly waste grain left on the field after harvest and is therefore no loss, but much of it on the other hand is sprouting grain which is dug up as soon as it germinates and a good deal of that taken in August and September is from standing crops. If we thus far give this bird the benefit of the doubt and say that the harm is balanced by the good we have to take into account the fact that it sometimes eats the eggs and young of other birds and also drives away other birds of undoubted utility, which places it on the wrong side of the ledger, and we are bound to consider it as a species which does rather more harm than good and which should consequently be kept in check.

THE HORSE.

Fed Less Hay.

Editor "The Farmer's Advocate":

Some time ago you asked your readers' experience with feeding horses during the past winter. I will send my own and hope it may prove of some benefit to someone else. "Cutting down" was a word usually means cutting out waste" was a paragraph in "The Farmer's Advocate" about four months ago and if followed this winter would have paid a year's subscription to your paper many times over for every horse kept. I have often thought that the average farm horse got far too much hay and possibly not quite enough oats. So as feed was very high and not enough in the barns to waste any, I thought this winter was as good a time as any to try and save a