FARM AND DAIRY & RURAL HOME

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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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The Result of Mac's Cow Testing

The Story of a Cape Breton Farmer—*By John H. McDonald*

"I DON'T believe cows pay," said a grizzled old Cape Breton farmer, as he leaned up against the cracker barrel at the village store. "They never paid me, and they never will. I am going into sheep next year."

"If you put as much brains into your business as I have to," the merchant started to remark as he put the cover down tight on the cracker barrel, and put a case of sardines on top, but he was interrupted.

"Do you know what you gain or lose on your cows?" asked a young man who had taken a college course.

"No," said the farmer, "how do you think I was going to know what each cow was doing?"

"Well," replied the young man, who, by the way, was a rising farmer, "did you ever hear of cow-testing?"

"I did, but who is going to start fooling with cans and scales when he has something else to do?" answered the older man, who was known throughout the district as "Mac." In a short time the college man was explaining to "Mac" how simple cow-testing really was, when one knows how. The upshot of the conversation was that "Mac" purchased two extra milk pails and a dial-faced spring balance.

This conversation took place in January, 1912. Mac's cows began to freshen in February, and with all the enthusiasm of a convert to a new cause, he carefully measured and weighed each cow's milk. He would place an empty pail on the scale and turn the pointer back to 0. When he milked a cow he poured her milk into the pail and marked on a chart the amount of each. The charts were obtained from the Central Experimental Farm free.

Surprises for "Mac."

During that summer "Mac" ran up against several surprises. The greatest was that his ten cows averaged only about 3,500 pounds each. His pet cow, one that filled a three gallon pail morning and evening during two of the summer months came third on the list. The best cow, as shown by his tests, was one that never made much of a show, but kept continually at it. Altogether the results of his summer's tests turned his ideas upside down.

Two of his cows went very little over 1,000 pounds. These he sent straight to the butcher along with the next lowest on the list. In their place he bought two grade Holsteins.

He did not feed his cattle very well, but as his interest in increasing the production of his herd grew more intense he began to take more interest in the feeding problem. When the season of 1913 was over, and he had his accounts balanced, he found that his two grade cows averaged 8 000 lbs. of milk for the year. The rest of his herd averaged about 4,500 lbs. The two grades brought up the average production to 5,200.

The fact that most impressed him was that his two grades produced 16,000 lbs., while the seven scrubs totalled 31,500 lbs. At this rate four grades would be better than his seven. At the end of the season of 1913 Mac sold five of his scrub cows, and in their place bought two pure bred Holsteins. His herd was growing small, but his milk cans were more numerous.

Better Feeding Came Next.

Not alone the questions of better stock and breeding engaged him. He began to study his feeding methods, and the problem of growing more and better feed. The spring of 1914 found Mac trying to grow a small patch of fodder corn and a plot of a mixture of oats, peas and vetches. The corn was a disappointment, but the O. P. V. was a good success. He cut it early and fed it when the pasture was short. The result was fully up to his expectations.

His tests this season showed that his herd yield amounted to 44,000 lbs.; this, with only six cows, two pure breds, two grades and the two best of his scrubs. This showed him in a very practical manner the truth of the saying that "the better your stock, the greater your profits."

The two pure bred cows averaged 9,000 each, while the scrubs averaged but 5,000 lbs. Mac invested in a pure bred bull with a good record behind him. He sold his two scrub cows and a young bull from the pure bred cows. With the proceeds of this sale he bought two more pure bred cows. They cost him more than he got for those he sold, but he was satisfied with his deal.

A Silo Will be Next.

In 1915 Mac had three acres of oats, peas and vetch mixture. Part of this he fed green during the summer and fall. The rest he cured for hay. He found it hard to dry, but this year he intends to build a small silo, even if corn will not succeed in Cape Breton.

In last season's milking period Mac's cows produced 54,000 pounds of milk. His four pure bred cows produced three thousand pounds more of milk in 1915 than did his seven scrubs in 1912.

This year Mac is putting in a large amount of the O. P. V. mixture and turnips. Mangels are not always a heavy crop in Cape Breton, so he grows turnips instead. He will have nine cows this year, three grades and six pure bred cows. His interest in better farming is daily increasing. Already his farm shows the result of better methods, while his bank account is waxing fat every month. He is now turning his attention to the marketing end of the business; heretofore he simply sold his butter at the country store. This year he intends to sell direct to the consumer.

This was all the result of his cow-testing and the greater interest he took in the business of farming. Instead of being classed with the average, he is among the successful few.

The Man of the Hour

GREAT Britain, France and Italy are in need of wheat.

Their supplies in normal years came most largely from Russia, Bulgaria and Roumania. This year they must come from Canada, Australia, India and the United States.

Australia and India are so far away and ocean tonnage so limited that their supplies are of almost secondary importance. The United States is not a great exporter of bread products, the needs of her own people now almost equalling her production.

The need of the Empire is a greatly increased production of foodstuffs in Canada. The farmer is the man of the hour. With him, as much as the man in the trenches, lies the surety of victory. All forces should co-operate to increase the exportable surplus of breadstuffs this year. The farmer will do his part. The cities also must do theirs by supplying man power. Finally the banks can render a great service by financing the 1917 crop.

Fresh Air and Tuberculosis

CATTLE in well ventilated stables are not necessarily immune from tuberculosis. Even in California, where dairy herds live almost altogether in the open, the disease is spreading. The bacillus floats as readily in fresh as in foul air. The cattle in well ventilated stables, however, are more vigorous and better able to resist disease. They will produce more milk and larger and stronger calves. The only method of keeping a herd absolutely clean, however, is to use the tuberculin test regularly and eliminate all reactors.

And it is becoming increasingly important that tuberculosis be eliminated. City milk consumers are demanding milk from herds with a clean bill of health. Surplus stock from diseased herds cannot now be exported to the United States, nor will British Columbia take them. It looks like "Clean up because we have to."—J.W.