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EDITORIAL.

The Educational Winter Fairs.

The most important of all the live-stock exhibitions of the Dominion, from the farmers' standpoint, are the winter fairs advertised to be held in the present month: the Ontario Provincial, at Guelph, from the 10th to the 13th, and the Maritime Provinces initial show, at Amherst, Nova Scotia, from the 17th to the 19th.

The summer shows bring out representatives of the breeds in profusion as to numbers and of the best types, the handiwork of professional breeders, but the object of the winter fair is to bring together in competition the finished article for commercial purposes, fresh from the hands of the feeder, fitted for the butcher's block and for the best markets. This is the ultimate end of the breeding and feeding of most farm animals, and is a subject in which nearly every farmer is personally interested.

Economy of production is the principal consideration that faces the farmer in these times of close competition, costly labor, and high-priced feedstuffs. Upon the feeding of animals on the farm depends the fertility of the land, and on the breeding and type of the animals fed and the method and manner of the feeding depends largely, if not wholly, the profit or loss in the operation. At the Winter Fairs practical expert judges select the best type of animals suited to present-day markets, placing them in the order of merit comparatively, and expert breeders, buyers, butchers and purveyors, with the living animals and the dressed carcasses before them as object lessons, point out and explain to a comfortably-seated audience the desirable and undesirable points in each, and indicate the best methods of selecting, breeding, feeding and caring for such animals for the production of the desirable class of product.

The Winter Fair is distinctly educational in its aim and purpose from start to finish, and here farmers, young and old, free from the profusion and variety of the attractions and distractions of the summer shows, may quietly and calmly study the exhibits and learn lessons helpful to them in their own business, for in farming and the feeding and management of farm stock the oldest and most experienced are never too old to learn.

In Ontario, through liberality of the Provincial Government and the persistent and praiseworthy efforts of the Cattle, Sheep and Swine Breeders' Associations, the Winter Fair has become a permanent institution, and now that the Dairymen's and the Poultry Breeders' Associations have affiliated with the Winter Fair, we have an exhibition including, besides the meat-producing animals, a well-conducted milking trial, and probably the largest and best show of live and dressed poultry on the continent. The dairy and poultry interests of the Dominion are of immense and increasing value and importance, and these are given special prominence at the Winter Fair, lectures by experts and practical demonstrations of the most approved methods in breeding, feeding and preparation for market being given in each department.

The Maritime Provinces have made a good beginning, as is evidenced by the liberal prize list offered and the practical and energetic staff of officers and committeemen entrusted with the management of their first show, and while they

may not have all the conveniences of the older institution in Ontario, we must remember that the latter was started in a hotel stable, and that what has been accomplished in the one case may, by perseverance and good management, be attained in others.

Of this we are confident—there is no enterprise in the land more deserving of financial support from our Governments than these efforts to induce farmers more generally to devote their attention to the improvement of live stock, since it is by long odds the most important factor in the export trade of the country and the comfort and well-being of the people, and for this reason there need be no hesitation on the part of the promoters in demanding recognition and generous support by the authorities.

The granting by the railways of a single-fare privilege for the round trip to those attending the Winter Fairs should prove an inducement to more than ever of the farmers and their sons, their wives and daughters, to avail themselves of the opportunity to take in the advantages afforded by these fixtures.

The Contest of the Cows.

The result of the six-months dairy test at the Pan-American Exhibition may at first sight, and without proper consideration of the circumstances, seem to many disappointing. Compared with many of the records that have been published of the tests of individual cows, they may appear unsatisfactory, since we have authentic records of single cows giving up to 20,000 lbs. of milk and of others producing over 1,000 lbs. of butter within a year, while the highest record of milk by one cow at the Buffalo trial was 8,140 lbs. and the highest product of estimated butter 354 lbs. in the first six months of lactation. The impression will doubtless prevail with many that the best cows that could be found were selected and included in the Pan-American test, and that the result is a fair measure of the capabilities of the best cows of the breeds participating in the contest. A fair consideration of the circumstances will show that such is not a reasonable conclusion. It is well known that a large majority of the best cows in pure-bred herds are bred to produce their calves in the autumn, for the reasons that, if required for show purposes at the fairs, being fresh, they will be in the best condition for that purpose, that their calves will be well forward to show as under a year at the following year's shows, and will be long yearlings and two-year-olds in the shows of succeeding years, and the bull calves the best age for selling and for service at the end of the year. This fact, it will be admitted, largely limited the choice from among the best cows, and the selection was necessarily made from such as were available that had calved in the spring or were due to freshen about the time of the commencement of the trial. Then there are the additional facts that American cows of two of the principal dairy breeds were not represented, that Canadian cows were hurriedly selected in the last few weeks before the opening of the show, and that but few of them had even been tested to prove their capabilities.

The disadvantages the cows labored under in respect to feeding and surroundings must also be taken into consideration. They were taken away from their comfortable homes, their companionships and their familiar feeders at the end of

April, and fed by new feeders, kept all summer in stables with open doors, subject to the nervous irritation and excitement incident to the passing of a constant stream of visitors, and the attacks of myriad flies in a temperature which at times ran up to over 100 degrees, causing positive suffering and a distinct shrinkage in milk secretion.

It should also be remembered that the feeding was not conducted with the object of securing the largest possible quantity of milk or butter, but the greatest profit on the food consumed, and for this reason cheaper foods were used than would have been had the object been the greatest quantity, and doubtless time was lost in the effort to adapt the feed to the cows and the cows to the conditions to obtain the desired end. With all these disadvantages to contend against, it must be conceded that the cows did good work and demonstrated that milking cows can be fed at a profit even under adverse conditions, for while the price allowed for butter—25 cents per pound—was high, the price charged for feed was also higher than that of the average of years on the farm. In estimating the profits in the test, no account was taken of the skim milk, the buttermilk, or the manure, these being allowed to offset the cost of labor.

Taking the record of the herd standing third on the list for profit in butter-fat as an average of the best of the herds, we find that the five cows gave an average profit on the six months' feeding of \$41 each in round numbers. Granting that cows will milk ten months in the year, and allowing that the average production of the herd cited for the remaining four months would be \$25, we may figure an average profit for such cows of \$69 for ten months' work. While there is nothing in this showing that may not be equalled by good management by any intelligent and careful dairy farmer, it will bear discounting considerably and yet demonstrate that dairying is one of the most profitable branches of farming, if not decidedly the most profitable, that the average farmer can engage in.

The "Model Dairy" has served to teach some important lessons, among which is that for profit there is more in the individual cow than in the breed, that there are grand good cows in most if not all the breeds claiming to be either special dairy or dual purpose, that milk and butter can be produced at a good profit, and that it is unsafe to judge of a cow's capability for profitable work by any less reliable method than the use of the scales and the butter-fat test. Lessons may also be learned from a study of the feeding of the cows, which is another story and will bear discussion, but probably the most outstanding is that of the great value of corn ensilage as a cheap, palatable and profitable food for cows, not only for winter feeding, but for summer use as well.

We have frequently referred in these columns to the highly absorptive properties possessed by milk, and the danger of contamination when milk is so placed that injurious odors of any kind are allowed to come into contact with it. For this reason dairy farmers and cow owners generally should make arrangements for having milk removed from the stables as soon as possible after being drawn from the cows. This is specially important at this season of the year, when the animals are housed, and when, owing to a variety of obvious reasons, the risk of contamination is considerably greater than during the summer or autumn months.