

Farm Miscellany

MILK STANDARD

By W. F. Vickery, Calgary

To fix a standard for cow's milk as it comes into commerce is a most difficult matter. It is a well known fact that milk varies considerably in quality from day to day and even from morning to night with a sudden change of weather. The temperature being either extremely hot or cold, down will go the percentage of fat. But sometimes, when animals are kept under normal conditions and apparently no cause, the composition of milk yielded by individual cows sometimes varies. The breed would greatly influence the quality as cows like the Channel Island breed give a very high percentage of fat and as this qualification is inherited by them, it is little affected by food.

Individuality is another factor. Some cows actually give very rich milk and others of a poor quality. This being the case, every dairyman should test the milk of each cow and discover the characteristics of each animal; he would then be in a position to weed out from his herd those that were giving milk below the required standard. The health of the animal is very important as a cow suffering from advanced tuberculosis would give milk containing a low fat percentage. Again, another factor is the period of lactation, as at the commencement a large flush of milk is given but of poor quality, but toward the end the total solids increase greatly. Then another consideration is the first and last drawn milk. First drawn milk is always poor in fat, as, owing to distention there is an ever increasing pressure towards the sides of the milk secreting glands, which hinders the passage of the solids of milk into the reservoirs, but as the pressure is removed on milking these solids are able to pass down. The first drawn milk may contain from 1 to 4 per cent. fat, while the last would contain about 10 per cent.

Some breeds yield a larger quantity than others, but usually where a large quantity of milk is produced the fat percentage is not very high. Individuality also influences the quantity as some cows naturally yield a large quantity of milk. At the beginning of the lactation period a large quantity of milk is given, which decreases after a flush period, lasting often about four months. The food is an important factor as cows fed on any food which contains a high percentage of albuminoids would yield a large quantity of milk. Then, again, cows fed on watery foods such as brewers' grains, produce a large quantity of milk, but of a watery character.

The temperature of the cow barn would also largely affect the quantity of milk as the warmer the barn in moderation, the more milk produced, the reason being that less food is required to keep up the body heat. The amount of milk secreted depends on the size and activity of the glands and the size of the blood vessels going to and from the udder. Before I conclude, I should like to give some very common reasons for a cow giving less milk than she ordinarily should. These are as follows: Ill treatment, exertion, chasing by dogs, strange milkers, slow milkers and not stripping clean of the milk.

SHEARING

The tendency on the part of farmers is always to shear sheep late, say in May or June. Some do this through reasons of sympathy for the sheep thinking that the sheep suffer from cold when shorn early; others do it through reasons of economy, thinking less grain is required to keep the sheep warm when it retains its own coat; still others shear late through reasons of carelessness or procrastination—in other words—just because they haven't done it early. The proper time to shear depends in large part upon the shelter that can be provided for the sheep, but it should be done just as early as is compatible with the well being of the sheep. Where warm barns are at hand into which sheep can be turned in case a cold snap comes, it is not believed they will suffer perceptibly from the cold, nor require a noticeably larger amount of feed, if they are shorn in April. And both observation and ex-

periment lead to the belief that sheep both eat and do better as soon as freed from their heavy coat, and also that wool production seems stimulated by the cooler weather and a heavier fleece results within the year than when the sheep are shorn in hot weather. Those of course who have no warm sheep barns will do better to wait until warm weather is surely here than to shear early and run the risk of losing some of the flock from pneumonia.

Many a farmer makes a big boast of how many sheep he can shear in an hour, but in many of these instances examination of the sheep shows them to be in sorry plight—excited to the last degree, panting, bloody, with here and there big patches of skin torn or cut out. Casting aside all humanitarian principles from the financial standpoint even it must be admitted that it does not pay to so frighten and abuse sheep. It often takes days for a sheep to calm down and when in such a highly nervous state some of the organs of her body are functioning properly and she is not getting the good of her feed, nor is she giving milk that is suitable for her lamb. Feverishness of the ewe often causes digestive disorders in the lamb and we have known many a good lamb to be half ruined through rough handling of the ewe at shearing time. When one gets in such a big hurry his shears glance this way and that and he often cuts the wool fibre an inch or two above where he wants to, making a second cut necessary. Wool buyers are looking for long, uniformly long fibres, and they are bound to buy at a discount those hacked up fleeces. It surely is a great deal better all round to handle the ewe carefully, not excite or injure her, and to go slowly enough so that each cut of the shears will be immediately effective. With experience, speed will come naturally anyway, but enforced speed cannot be anything else than disastrous.

It is noticed that a representative of a shearing machine firm claims that they make a comb that enables the user to clip

the fleece much more closely than formerly; to practically shave the sheep. Whether machine or hand shears are used, the writer does not believe it is desirable to clip so closely. The only instance where it might be so would be in case one were to dispose of each sheep at once. In that case he might profit by the added weight of that eighth or sixteenth of an inch; otherwise, if he keeps his sheep and shears them again, he will save nothing; he will simply get an eighth or a sixteenth of an inch of wool this year instead of next, for the annual wool growth remains practically fixed. Such extremely close shaving leaves the sheep too unprotected and constitutes too pronounced a change from the heavy fleece.

WEED INSPECTOR'S SHORT COURSE

It has been announced that the second annual short course for municipal weed inspectors will be held at Manitoba Agricultural college, June 13 to 17. An interesting program, dealing with the more practical features of weed identification and extermination is being prepared, and special rates are being arranged for on the railways. At the short course last year, which was the first of the kind ever held in this country, the attendance was over 70. It is expected that a much larger number will avail themselves of the opportunities offered this year.

FLOUR MILLING BENEFITS

Mr. Robert Meighen has declared that reciprocity will injure the flour milling industry. The following statement made in the House of Commons on April 11 by T. A. Low, member for South Renfrew, Ontario, and himself a flour miller, shows the inaccuracy of Mr. Meighen's statement:

"We have heard about the industries of this country being ruined. It is the same old story; it has the same old ring as it had in 1897. I have noted the singular absence from the remarks of hon. gentlemen opposite of the actual name of any industry that will be ruined by this arrangement. The only members who have made any attempt in this direction are the hon. member for North Toronto (Mr. Foster), and the hon. member for Brandon (Mr. Sifton). The hon. member for Brandon, speaking in the House the other day, said that the flour milling industry of this country would be ruined, that the

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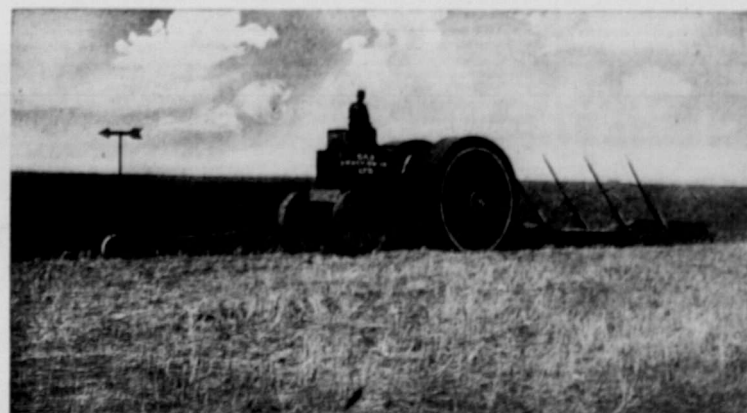
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agreement would have a most disastrous effect upon that industry. The only thing I can say to my hon. friend is that I am slightly interested in a flour mill, and from my knowledge of the flour milling business, if there is one industry in this country that should be able to compete with the world it is that very industry. We have the best wheat, we have cheap railway facilities and we have cheap power. These things go to make it possible to compete with the world. Notwithstanding the disastrous effect my hon. friend from Brandon says it is going to have upon the flour milling trade of this country, in the early part of the year we contemplate increasing our flour milling business. We have a mill with a capacity of 250 barrels a day, and we propose this summer, notwithstanding the effect that this tariff will have upon it, increasing the capacity to 500 barrels. This is the best answer that I can give to my hon. friend from Brandon."

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