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EDITORIAL.

The Principles and Practice of Live-stock Judging.

The importance of the exercise of correct and careful judgment in the selection of breeding stock, and also in their placing in order of merit in competitive exhibitions, can scarcely be over-estimated when we consider what it means to the breeder in direct influence upon the character of a herd, or as a business advertisement to the exhibitor. An error of judgment in the selection of a sire may mar the symmetry and quality of a herd, as a result of his term of service, leaving an impress for ill, noticeable for years, and even generations, and which, in some cases, can only be effectively effaced by culling out and disposing of his entire offspring and their progeny. The effect of an error of judgment in the show-ring may be of less serious consequence, since an animal misplaced or overlooked by the judge, is for practical purposes no worse for having been slighted or neglected, and may come to its own under a more competent judge some other day, or prove its superior worth by its record as a producer in a herd. But the judge is rightly expected, by his rulings, to set the standard of most desirable and approved type, or at least to indicate, by his rating, the type and quality best suited to the demands of prevailing markets. He is in that sense regarded as an instructor, his decisions being supposed, by those needing information, to be accepted as correct, and since they may be misled by his work, to their serious loss in their future transactions, his duty becomes an exceedingly important one, demanding careful and conscientious exercise. The person accepting the position of judge, in order to be a safe arbiter, should have had the benefit of experience in breeding, raising and handling the class of stock he undertakes to place in relative position. He also needs to be a close and careful observer, with a correct ideal type in his mind, and an eye quick to detect variations from that ideal, and his powers of observation are greatly helped by being kept in continuous use. A man who has been retired from the business of breeding and handling stock, is liable to forget or lose sight of the correct standard of type and quality, unless he has continued to closely follow and observe the work of competent judges. An eminent authority has said: "When a distinct ideal, based on the best types, and their highest qualities, has been formed in the mind, and this is supported by a discriminating eye, it is but another step to render a correct judgment."

In judging pure-bred stock in the show-ring, the standard of excellence agreed upon and established by the breeders for the breed under inspection, where such exists, should be relied upon chiefly as a guide, and not to be followed to the letter, as many circumstances and conditions will crop up in comparing exhibits which may justify some departure from its strict interpretation. No cast-iron rules need be followed, but the judge who has confidence in himself and his judgment, should rather feel free to trust his own intuitions as to the general character of the animal he decides to put first, from the standpoint of the indications of constitutional vigor, soundness, and suitability for the production of progeny true to the best type of the breed and for the practical purposes of its class. While it should be the aim of the judge to so rank the animals under inspection that a uniformity of type may prevail in his selections for preference, he has to be guided to some extent by the character of the exhibits before him, and if, as may happen, there are not a sufficient number of animals conforming to the

approved type to fill the prize-list, he must do the best he can with the material at hand. And even though some of the entries may more nearly approach the desired type than others in conformation, they may be so lacking in indications of constitution or quality as to justify him in selecting the more robust and useful in appearance.

In judging horses, the judge should take into consideration the purposes for which the class is intended, whether for heavy-draft, for speed, or for symmetry or showy action, as in the case of the Coach or Carriage class. He should be informed upon the evidences of unsoundness and the formation of the limbs and their joints having a tendency to unsoundness in themselves or to the production of such in their offspring. He should know how to discriminate between true and faulty action, and to this end should study the object of the different classes of desirable action, whether for propelling power as in heavy work, for speed and stamina in racing, or for smoothness and style in the carriage class.

In the beef-producing classes of cattle, as indeed in all classes, the evidences of constitutional vigor should have a first place in the judge's mind and eye. These are, briefly, a broad head and muzzle, a short face, a bright eye, a wide chest, deep and well-sprung ribs; a strong, level back, and well-placed limbs, of fine texture of bone. Fine, furry hair and a velvety-handling hide of medium thickness, go with a good feeder; long, level quarters, deep thighs and flanks, and an even, deep covering of natural flesh on loin and ribs when in fair condition, are indications of a profitable feeder, while, in breeding classes, breed type and character must be considered.

In the dairy cattle classes, the conformation approved is the wedge shape—broader and deeper in the hind quarters than in front, in the case of females. Other requirements are: Sparseness rather than thickness of flesh, long, deep and well-sprung ribs, giving capacity for working up large quantities of food; long, level quarters and thin thighs, with soft-handling skin and hair, and especially a capacious, well-shaped and not too fleshy udder, with well-placed teats of medium or fairly large size. The bull in this class should show strong sexual characteristics, have a decided masculine appearance in head, neck and chest, indicating impressive power or prepotency, and should have less width of hooks and hind quarters than the female.

In judging sheep for mutton and wool combined, constitution and quality of flesh, fleece and bone have to be considered, as well as breed character, and a careful study of the different characteristics of the various breeds is essential to a satisfactory rating in the show-ring.

In judging swine, the butcher's or buyer's preference must be the leading guide, as it is in all classes of fat stock or meat-producing animals, since these preferences are largely controlled by the demands of the markets, and while the present preference for the bacon type prevails, breeders do well to aim at meeting the demand with the class and character of hogs required, but in doing so, need not abandon a useful breed or lose sight of a breed type, but should rather, by selection and management, conform their favorite breed to the requirement of the markets, a course which has been proven to be practicable in the case of most of the breeds in this country. Smoothness of shoulders, length and strength of back, and length and depth of sides, with long hind quarters, thick hams, light jowl, fine hair, and flat, flinty bone, with judicious management in feeding and care, fills the bill fairly well for breeder, feeder and the consumer.

Trading by Correspondence.

The practice of buying and selling pure-bred stock by correspondence, and without the buyer seeing his purchase before receiving it, has become so general that a very large per cent. of sales are now effected by breeders in this way. We do not say nor do we believe it is, as a rule, the best or safest course for the buyer. If he knows what he wants, and is a fairly good judge of the class of stock he desires to purchase, he had better, if it is reasonably practicable, see the animal priced to him, and decide for himself whether it is suitable for his purpose or not. If he has not confidence in his own judgment, and has no reason to doubt the integrity of the breeder with whom he corresponds, or if he considers that he will be justified in saving the time and expense involved in a journey to inspect the stock, he may, in most cases, fare as well by trusting the breeder to select for him. He should, however, in writing, state as fully and clearly as possible the description of animal he wants, and require from the breeder a statement of the breeding and a description of the animal he purposes to send, should an order be given; also, he should be requested to state whether his terms are cash before shipment or on delivery, whether the freight will be prepaid or not, and whether he will register the pedigree and transfer, naming the record, or will guarantee the pedigree eligible to registry, and will sign a transfer if required. All letters received in connection with the transaction should be kept on file, and copies made of those sent out. It pays to conduct business in a business-like manner, and, when the correspondence is kept, any misunderstanding between the parties can be more satisfactorily adjusted, and any deviations from the conditions agreed upon successfully challenged.

In a long experience in doing business in this way, the writer had knowledge of singularly few unsatisfactory transactions, and "The Farmer's Advocate," we are pleased to state, has received very few complaints of the conduct of its advertisers, it having been found necessary to cancel the advertisements of only two or three in the last ten years, owing to having received evidence of dishonest or discreditable dealings on their part. As a rule, the man who values his business reputation will be more careful to be on the safe side in suiting and satisfying a customer who trusts him to make the selection than when the buyer chooses for himself, and he knows, if he is possessed of a modicum of business acumen, that a creditable animal sent out is a good advertisement for himself and his stock, and likely to bring him further orders, while an inferior one is a damage to his reputation and a warning to others to steer clear of him.

It may be well to remind buyers that they should not be too hasty in condemning an animal received after a long journey unattended, possibly unfed or watered for days, and, it may be, confined in a cramped crate,—conditions all tending to present it in the worst condition for making a favorable impression at first sight. Unless the character of the stock is palpably untrue to the description, reasonable time should be given it, for rest and recuperation before being condemned. Shippers, however, cannot be too careful to see that stock is shipped in the most comfortable condition possible, with sufficient safe and suitable food and bedding sent along, and as far as practicable, arrangements made for watering en route, so that the animals may arrive in good shape as possible and impress the receiver favorably. To this end, where stock is shipped in crates, the latter should be neatly constructed, and sufficiently roomy to avoid cramping or crippling the ani-