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The True Causes of Sterility in Cattle.

(Experimental Farms Note.)

While the above subject is one to be treated by the veterinary pathologist, there are certain suggestions possible from the practical stockman. Briefly,—failure to breed in the case of dairy cattle is a condition little understood, in general, and regarded by many as a manifestation of amalign Providence. The loss of occasional individuals from the herd is looked upon as simply another one of the many factors that contribute toward the high cost of milk production. However, research and careful study have combined to throw much light on the question.

The man who has one or two non-breeders in his herd, should resort to the services of a skilled veterinarian and be guided by his diagnosis. The breeder, however, who finds numerous cases in his herd has a serious problem on his hands.

THE DANGEROUS KIND OF STERILITY.

First let it be supposed that the potency of the herd sire is proven. Many bulls are undoubtedly "poor getters." Nine times out of ten they have been made so by lack of exercise, injudicious feeding, or over use when too young. The congenitally sterile bull is infrequently found. Absolving the bull from blame, the following conditions may, any or all, be found in the herd: 1. Cows returning to service regularly. 2. Cows returning to service irregularly. 3. Cows failing to show oestrus. 4. Cows showing vaginal discharge regularly or at intervals (such cases do not, as a rule, come in oestrus). 5. Cows that may or may not come in oestrus but that exhibit male characteristics, roaring and pawing the ground after the fashion of bulls,—"bullers" as they are commonly known. Such cases where of considerable standing are usually to be detected by a marked elevation of the broad ligaments. They are known technically as "Nymphomaniacs," and doubtless deserve it. It must be stated, too, that cows are occasionally temporarily sterile, due to temporary bodily disturbances.

Should the foregoing enumeration include or describe several individuals in the herd, the owner may ask himself whether his herd has ever been infected with contagious abortion, or an apparent epidemic or retained afterbirth. If so, he may conclude that his herd is affected by still another manifestation of the dread abortion bacillus. Retained afterbirth, where found to any extent, usually either follows or accompanies contagious abortion infections, and is responsible, whether as described or in the occasional form, for many cases of sterility, due, most often, no doubt, to improper or incomplete removal.

The direct causes of sterility are frequently found in (1) acidity of the organs; (2) a catarrhal infection of the vagina, cervix or uterus, resulting in discharge; (3) an inflamed condition of the vagina or cervix (vaginitis or cervicitis); (4) cystic ovaries, etc. To the average practical stockman, not versed in the anatomy of what he cannot see, diagnosis is impossible. He knows that his cow will not breed. If she is valuable enough to warrant it, he must get a professional diagnosis, provided he is fortunate enough to be able to avail himself of the services of a veterinary who is a "cow-doctor," and who, more rarely still, has paid attention to such a problem as described.

TREATMENT.

Any attempt to describe treatment is useless until the definite cause of trouble is located; in most cases a few special forceps, catheters, dilators, are necessary. Moreover, one or two treatments are entirely useless, as a rule, and it is to insufficient treatment that failure of success may be most frequently attributed. Treatment consists usually of simple douchings with mild antiseptics suitable for uterine conditions, although for certain causes manipulation and massaging are necessary. For success any treatment must be persisted in.

The foregoing is a very brief, incomplete and possibly technically incorrect statement of the case. The correction of sterility in cattle is no simple matter, and this the stockman must remember. If, however, the trouble is serious and wide spread in the herd, the best advice possible is—get a good practitioner, buy the few necessary instruments and, after the initial diagnosis and treatment, follow his directions carefully.—G. B. ROTHWELL, Dominion Animal Husbandman.

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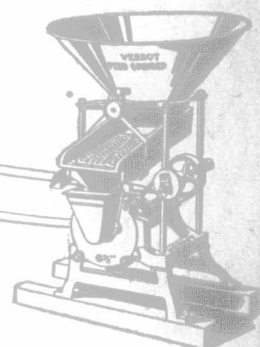
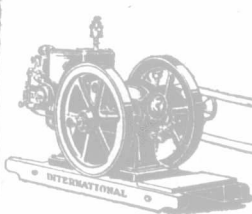
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