

# "Hold Fast That Which is Good"

## A Word of Warning to Holstein-Friesian Breeders

F. E. Ellis, Editor, Farm and Dairy

IN the history of every breed of cattle there comes a time when its breeders must make decisions that will have a far-reaching influence on the usefulness of the breed. Such a crisis has now been reached in the history of the Holsteins in America.

Holstein breeders in the past have made "Utility" their great motto. In a supreme effort to make the Holstein cow a great and efficient producer of human food, undue emphasis has not been laid on fine points in color and conformation. It is the consummation of this common sense ideal that has given the black and white breed the popularity that it now en- joys.

Having brought their cattle to a high degree of efficiency as producers (although there is yet much room for improvement in many herds), a tendency is now clearly apparent on the part of some to work another characteristic into their cattle—light color. Already many Holstein breeders prefer to see their calves coming largely on the white side. Many of them would go down a little deeper into their pockets if they thought they could get a sire that would breed to the white.

### COLOR OR EFFICIENCY

And yet white color has nothing to do with the efficiency of the animal as a producer, and in the long run the preference for white must prove to be only a fad. Our Holstein breeders would do well to remember that, in the words of Mr. Malcolm H. Gardiner, "adherence to any fad is not only detrimental to any breed, but also has a tendency to narrow the market for stock in that breed."

It is a universally recognized rule of breeding that the more objects one has in view the more difficult it is to attain those objects. The greatest success is invariably achieved by the one purpose breeder. The history of almost every breed is besprinkled with stories of disaster due to too much importance being placed on the particular fad in vogue at the time. If Holstein men go wrong at this late date it is because they refuse to learn from the abundant experiences of breeders of other kinds of cattle.

### A CASE IN POINT

Take the Hereford for instance. The Hereford is probably the oldest breed of cattle on the British Isles. But the "white faces" do not begin to compare in numbers or in popularity with the Shorthorn. This does not necessarily indicate that Hereford breeders have not been so skilled as have Shorthorn breeders, or that their cattle are naturally inferior. They aren't.

The difference is that the early Shorthorn breeders made rent paying cattle their object, while early Hereford breeders were divided into three camps, each camp having strains of different color and each man insisting that the standard color for the breed must be the color of his particular



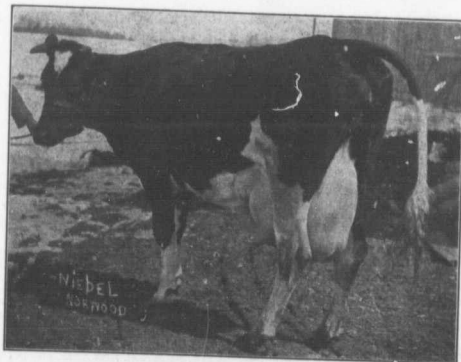
A Black Holstein Without an Equal in the World

Spring Farm Pontiac Lass, 44.152 lbs. of butter in seven days, the world's champion butter producer, is almost black. In this invaluable cow and her progeny to be discredited because of their color?—Cut courtesy Holstein-Friesian Register.



One of the Recent Canadian Champions: Mostly Black!

This is Neatherland Favorit, owned by W. H. Cherry, Garnet, Ont. Her record is 21.66 lbs. of butter in 7 days and 21.66 lbs. butter in 30 days as a two-year-old. Notice that this crack producer, too, is more black than white.



Why isn't Her Color as Good as Her Record?

De Kol Mutual Countess, owned by G. A. Brethen, Norwood, Ont., is a world beater. She holds no less than four world's records. Her progeny are almost as black as she is. Are we to judge the family from their color or what they do at the pail?

strain. And while Hereford breeders "scrapped" among themselves the Shorthorn went ahead and took first place.

But prosperity seems to disturb equilibrium. Shorthorn breeders were getting along so famously, that they thought that they too could afford to follow a fad and the ban was placed on white cattle. Roan was the color desired, red was a good second and a white animal, with many breeders, would scarcely be recognized. It would be hard to estimate the number of splendid animals that would have done much to improve the breed in conformation and fleshing that went to the block because of their white color. Shorthorn breeders have now seen their mistake, and the white animal is as popular as the roan if its conformation is as good.

### A LESSON FROM THE JERSEY

Dairy cattle breeders have not been immune to the germs of color "insanity." In the case of Jersey cattle the fashionable color has changed at least a half a dozen times, solid light fawn being preferred at one time and solid dark at another. Most of our large Jersey breeders have found it necessary to keep strains that breed largely light and strains that breed largely dark in the one herd in order to meet the fickle changing demands of the buyer.

In the old days when the Jersey breed had the field practically to itself as the popular dairy breed of America, many of the best animals were of broken color. In fact, practically all of the great record makers in those early days had a combination of light and dark coloring and not a few of them splashes of white.

### STRAINS BECOME EXTINCT THROUGH FAD

So insistent did the demand become for the solid color that many of the best strains became extinct; that is, best from the standpoint of production. On the other hand, many animals that should never have lived past their first week sold for long prices because their color was just right.

The inevitable revulsion in feeling has now come, and it is frequent now-a-days to see a broken colored animal come at the head of its class. In recent years one notable winner at Toronto Exhibition has had large splashes of the once objectionable white. It will take Jersey breeders, however, many years to overcome all of the damage that color fads have done their breed.

### GREAT HOLSTEINS DARK IN COLOR

If the great cows and the great sires of the Holstein breed as we have it to-day were more white than black, the desire for light colors would not constitute as great a menace as it does. Every Holstein breeder knows that not only the majority, but practically all of the great cows of the breed are more black than white, and that

(Continued on page 7)