

FARM AND DAIRY & RURAL HOME

A Friendly Criticism of Ontario Live Stock Breeders

PERHAPS after the past six years of coming and going rather intimately amongst the breeders of Ontario and a part of Quebec, my good friends will forgive me for a little well-meant criticism, such the editors of Farm and Dairy have requested me to give in this Exhi' tion number. Now that I have gotten somewhat away from agriculture, and more into the world of business, I look back on the old experiences and observations with a somewhat new perspective. Moreover, I feel much freer to talk or write about this subject, as assigned me, than were I still in the Managing Editor's chair, or even were I still the Advertising Manager of Farm and Dairy. Therefore I shall be quite frank. Here's to it!

From a Friend and Old Acquaintance who has Made Good Use of an Unusually Good Opportunity to Fit Himself to Deliver This Message.

By CHAS. C. NIXON



Chas. C. Nixon

Comparisons are invariably odious. Therefore the effort shall be to keep away from them in so far as possible. Intercourse and visits with United States breeders have brought home to me most forcibly that they have at least a few things well in advance of our Canadian breeders. This conviction has been with me for some years. It was deepened greatly last summer on the occasion of an extensive trip through New York state when I was visiting Holstein breeders, inspecting their stock and enquiring into their methods.

Perhaps the difference may be explained in a few words by stating that many of our own breeders seem to have gotten into the business in a more or less uncertain way. Their business seems to have grown very much "like Topsy grew,"—she simply happened! There are a good many of marked exceptions to this statement, but these serve well to prove the rule. Our breeders in general will make much greater progress when with greater ambition they start in "building castles in Spain." Great ideals are needed. Great courage is necessary to back up the ideals with sacrifice of time and money in setting suitable foundations under the "fair cases" and bringing them into a glorious tangible reality.

Note.—For nearly four years Mr. Nixon was the Managing Editor of Farm and Dairy. During the past two years he has had charge of Farm and Dairy advertising. Two months ago he severed his connection with the publication, where he is now starting into the publishing business on his own account.



What is the Value of Appearances in Selling Stock?

To put it another way: I have felt on many an occasion how much more greatly our breeders might progress had they even a little more faith in their own breeds and businesses, had they a little more enthusiasm, and much more courage to go ahead to do and buy and breed what they realize full well would bring them big and sure returns. Perhaps I will be forgiven should I say that a little more backbone is needed where now there is merely wishbone!

WHAT DOES IT PROFIT? UNLESS I might tell them about how to produce the stock. They know how to feed their stock. A great many of our better dairy cattle breeders know how to produce big records—even world beating records of milk and butter production. But after all what does it profit to produce the stock unless you can sell it and sell it at a profit!

The selling end is the great big end of the breeding business. It has been well said that anyone can manufacture. The difficult thing is to sell. And so it is in the business of breeding pure bred live stock. Quite a lot of it is being produced; and under present conditions quite a bit of it is being sold fairly well. But how much of it might be sold much better,—sold to please the purchasers better,—sold to make the business grow still better and better than ever,—and sold to make a more attractive return to the producer or breeder!

THOUGHT AND STUDY IN SELLING

While I have visited at scores and scores of breeders' places in Ontario, I can count on one hand all of the breeders who seem to have realized the tremendous possibilities of the selling

end of their business. The others, like most of our average farmers, it would seem, have been content to merely produce. They evidently have given but little thought and study to how to make better (and the best) sales.

For instance, how many breeders do you know who have at their finger tips the details of breeding and the records made by, and back of, each one of their valuable pure bred animals? I have met in with many and many breeders who could not give me the registered names of more than the merest few of their animals. They had the records at the house. They would talk them over when we got in there!

ADVERSE INFLUENCE ON PROSPECTS

It is this same performance that would have to be gone through every time a buyer might happen along. And frankly, what chance has a man to interest a customer in his stock under such circumstances compared with another breeder, whose stock may be no better or not as good, but who is thoroughly posted on all points of advantage pertaining to each animal in his stable, who knows their names by heart, and who can string off all that is advisable for one to know about how each one of his animals traces back to other animals in his own herd and to noted animals in other herds! And, if you will, to those grand old individuals that have made history for themselves and for their breeds and have passed on to the great beyond!

There are no two ways about it, the man who has all of this vital information at his finger tips will very soon make a prospective customer feel that he simply must have one or more individuals in the herd he is looking over, or is hearing about! The breeder with this information acts psychologically on his prospect even as a salesman would. He makes his prospective customer enthuse over his "stock in trade." And forthwith the prospect becomes "a wanter." It is then easy to arrange the final details as to price, payment, and when to ship or deliver.

THE "PRICE" THAT MUST BE PAID

But all of this you say will require a lot of time to learn. It will take a lot of study of animals and of the records and pedigrees, even back into the herd books and the blue books. And true it will! But the time and study will pay most handsomely. It will be only the interested breeders who will so equip themselves. As for the rest they will not amount to much as breeders anyway until they develop the necessary interest in their breed. Then they will be glad to "pay the price" demanded here.