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EDITORIAL.

HORSEMEN'S EXPERIENCE - COMPETITION AWARDS.

The value of an agricultural journal depends to a great extent upon its readers—the men on the farms, who, bringing their thousands of minds to bear, from day to day, upon their own peculiar problems, evolve improved practices, overcome difficulties, and then contribute of their experience for the benefit of fellow readers similarly circumstanced. "The Farmer's Advocate" has always made a strong point of actual, every-day experience, and to this fact, more, perhaps, than to any other, may be ascribed its steady advance in the favor of Canadian farmers.

The most encouraging feature is that we never call upon our subscribers in vain. A request for experience seldom fails to bring to our desk a good grist of helpful correspondence. The latest example of this is the "Horsemen's Experience Competition," announced in our issue of December 5th, 1907. The close of the entries, on January 15th, found twenty communications in hand, from which we can promise our horse-column readers a weekly treat during the next two or three months. The three prizewinning articles and the best of the others will be published, one each week. For those articles other than the winning ones, regular contribution rates will be allowed, as used. Criticism of the articles is invited, as well as further contributions on any and all horse topics.

The task of judging these essays and awarding the prizes was assigned to our esteemed and reliable correspondent, "Whip," who has considered them very carefully, awarded prizes to three, and commended seven others. Following are the results:

First Prize.—John P. Nunan, Brant Co., Ont.

Second Prize.—Charles Dunlop, Carleton Co., Ont.

Third Prize.—Walter R. Broadfoot, Huron Co., Ont.

Commended in order of mention: W. Ormiston, Ontario Co., Ont.; Alex. Innes, Huron Co., Ont.; John B. McGerrigle, Chateauguay Co., Quebec; Andrew Scott, Montreal, Que.; Archie Bell, Huntingdon, Que.; Jas. H. Johnston, Lambton Co., Ont.; R. C. McGowan, Huron Co., Ont.

In the Horse Department of this issue will be found the first-prize essay. It was well written, requiring practically no editing, and, as the judge remarks, "It illustrates the danger of cross or careless breeding, and also the good results obtained by intelligent mating. The results he gives are not extravagant, and, while probably none have given improbable figures, I think this gentleman has given actual facts."

GETTING AT THE FACTS.

Facts are facts. It is the truth we are always after. If the muslin-curtain system of ventilation is inadequate or unsatisfactory, we want to know it. If less satisfactory than its champions have claimed, we want to know that. If it is insufficient or unsatisfactory by itself, perhaps it can be adapted to advantageous use in conjunction with our existing methods, say the King or the Rutherford systems. It is to determine such points as these that Mr. J. H. Grisdale, Agriculturist of the Central Experimental Farm, Ottawa, has undertaken the series of experiments, a preliminary report of which appears elsewhere in this issue. It is very gratifying that Mr. Grisdale has undertaken this work, because he is a professional agriculturist who enjoys a large measure of public confidence, and whose papers,

no one set of experiments will be regarded as conclusive, a good deal of attention will be paid to those conducted under his supervision. Thus far, his observations indicate that muslin curtains on the windows are not as thorough or convenient a system of ventilation as the convection systems already in use; that the ventilation, and consequently the temperature, depends to a considerable extent upon the velocity of the wind; that considerable watchfulness is necessary to insure a fair degree of success; that the stable is darkened, and that the curtains become fouled. On the other hand, in favor of the curtains, he finds they are cheap, and very much better than no ventilation at all. We understand it is now intended to experiment with this in conjunction with other systems, using the curtains as inlets for fresh air, with interior flues for outlets. By so doing, and by having only a part of the window space covered with curtain, having glass in the remaining area to let in light, much better results may be expected.

In any case, it is not improbable that the muslin-curtain system, or some modification, will be found worthy of recommendation to those not prepared to go in for anything more expensive. There are many Canadian stables with practically no ventilation at all. Some farmers do not even know what the word means. A wide-awake dairyman told us recently of such an instance. He was talking to a former neighbor, and criticising his stable, which was dark and absolutely unventilated. "You need ventilation," said his informant. "Y-es," responded the owner, uncertainly, "I am going to put a wall under it this winter, and then it will be elevated."

No wonder we have tubercular herds.

FLESH, FEATHERS OR HAIR?

Considerable has been heard of recent years about the "vitality" of Holstein milk and its peculiar virtue for infants by reason of that mysterious inherent quality. It will not be construed as a knock at this grand old dairy breed if we express a prevailing scepticism as to whether there is anything more in the claim than that Holstein milk is not overrich in fat, and consequently better adapted to weak stomachs and to the demand of growing bodies than the secretion of the Channel Island breeds. Milk is a food, not a force, and the idea that milk of certain origin contains a specific or particular elixir is rather a big dose to swallow in our present stage of dairy research.

But it has remained for our esteemed friend and correspondent, Mr. Robert Miller, to go the Holstein breeders one better, by advancing the novel theory that, as Shorthorn milk, fed to successive generations of calves, has produced flesh, bright, pink skins; soft, silky hair; thriftiness, plumpness, beauty and strength; therefore, might we not expect this kind of milk to produce better complexions in our children than that of the skinny, bare-boned cows, which rear skinny, bare-boned calves? Would milk that makes a blue or yellow skin in a calf be as apt to produce the tint wanted in human beings as milk produced by cows that have been bred for clear skins for a hundred years? Here is a nut for the dairymen to crack, and, while they take turns at it, the editors will lean back and rest their busy pencils for a while.

Just one thought we may throw out. Why is it that, with a goose and a horse grazing in the same pasture, one will produce feathers, and the other hair? Why is it that a Jersey cow nearly always gives milk high in butter-fat, no matter how she is fed? Why does the Ayrshire cow's milk contain such small butter-fat globules?

Would the handling quality of Shorthorn cattle deteriorate if the calves were reared on Holstein or Ayrshire milk? Are there not cows of the dairy breeds with the mellowest of skins and hair? Does it matter much what cow gives the milk, so long as it is reasonably free from injurious bacteria? How long would it take to impress Saxon complexions on the negro race by feeding the pick-aninnies on Shorthorn milk? Does not individuality, established by hereditary tendency, determine the use that will be made by each digestive and assimilative system, of milk, grass or beef?

BRAN AT FOUR DOLLARS A TON.

Eleven or twelve years' experience in growing alfalfa has converted that well-known dairy stalwart, Henry Glendinning, into an ardent alfalfa enthusiast, and, after keeping his own counsel till a year ago, so as to be perfectly sure of his ground, he has come out boldly as a platform advocate. At the Eastern and Western Dairymen's Conventions he delivered two telling addresses, mainly on the culture of this crop and its great value in economical milk production. His itemized statement of the cost of producing alfalfa hay will be found on page 85 of our issue of January 16th. It shows how, according to actual observation, he can produce and harvest, on an 8-acre field, an average crop of 5 to 6 tons per acre in three cuttings, for \$2.00 per ton, allowing \$4 per acre rent for the land, and 20 cents per ton of hay for contingencies. Mr. Glendinning privately assured us he was sorry the figures were so low. It is hard for people to believe them. For the past two winters his cows have been fed on corn silage, straw, mangels and alfalfa hay, with no grain except the corn in the silage; and we have reported the instances he quoted in his speeches, showing that they are milking very well indeed on this ration. At an estimated cost of 2 cents per feed, the alfalfa hay furnishes the protein for which he would have to pay 19 cents if purchased in the form of bran. Corn silage being a carbonaceous feed, and deficient in that essential element, protein, requires a feed like bran, oil meal, alfalfa or clover hay to supplement or "balance" it up. Oil meal contains about 28 per cent. protein, bran 12.2 per cent., well-cured alfalfa hay 11 per cent., and clover hay in the neighborhood of 6 per cent.; and the protein in the alfalfa is almost as digestible as that in the bran. With the latter by-product at \$22 to \$24 per ton, and alfalfa hay capable of being produced at \$2.00 per ton, it requires no mathematician to demonstrate that many farmers are missing a golden opportunity. If further testimony is wanted, it is furnished by the experience of many dairymen besides Mr. Glendinning, who are getting excellent results on a ration consisting chiefly of silage and alfalfa hay.

It may be thought that Mr. Glendinning's estimate of the cost of production is too low. Perhaps the margin of 20 cents per ton for contingencies is open to criticism, and this is invited. His itemized estimate of the cost of harvesting, under his conditions, cannot well be assailed, and the soil-improving virtue of alfalfa renders unnecessary any material allowance for extraction of fertility. Mr. Glendinning applies only three loads of manure per acre once in three years. (By the way, he has had marked results from the application of wood ashes.) We are of opinion, however, that, in view of the frequent failure in securing a catch, danger of occasional winter-killing, and risk in harvesting the first crop, a considerable margin should be allowed on these scores, although it is but fair to note that many