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LIVE STOCK SOCIETIES VS. SMALL FAIRS

A. W. Cohoe, Essex Co., Ont.

The Record of an Agricultural Society that has Given up Holding Small Exhibitions—It now Owns Pure Bred Sires—Remarkable Results in Stock Improvement—Some Advantages to Individual Members.

AFTER an experience of nearly half a century with agricultural societies, I am very much in favor of pure bred stock societies as against small fairs or exhibitions. Every member has the same opportunity to share the benefits derived from the society when it keeps pure bred stock and when a member goes to his stables or fields after his society has been connected with stock for a while he looks with pride at the improvement in his own live stock which he has got by using those pure bred sires owned by the society. This he will see every day in the year, and he will show his neighbors what he has gained by the society.

On the other hand, that man or his neighbor goes to a small fair. He may take some small prizes, which will scarcely pay for the trouble, and when the fair is over he will as a rule, when passing the fair grounds, see weeds of all kinds occupying the ground; these weeds will very likely ripen their seeds and be carried by the wind or otherwise over all adjacent land. He will also see the building and fences going to wreck and decay. Then when fair time approaches directors must spend considerable money in making repairs, and have to reduce the prize list to that extent.

HISTORY OF SOUTH WOODSLEE

As secretary-treasurer of the South Woodslee Agricultural Society, I will give a brief history of it. I learn from the books that this society was organized in 1852 with the object of holding fairs and improving the live stock. The officers were the pioneers who would never say fail. They bought some sires when money was available and held small fairs. These fairs were held in some field along a main road. The prizes paid for the first few years were less than \$25.00. However, the society leased land for holding fairs and erected buildings and South Woodslee became one of the noted fairs in the county, paying several hundred dollars each year in prizes. This expense, along with buying some stock animals, kept the society in debt, and it was finally decided to give up the holding of fairs, and to use the money in buying pure bred sires. This latter course has now been followed for several years. The result is we now have the largest stock society in the province of Ontario, owning 17 Durham bulls and 13 boars of the different breeds, which are spread over 10 by 12 miles of territory. These animals are making wonderful

improvement in the live stock in those lines. If the finances would permit, our society would like to own some registered stallions, which would put the scrub stallion out of business much more effectively than the licensing that has been so much talked of. Our society is run on a strictly cash basis. Therefore, if we bought a stallion for say \$1,000, he would have



Two Promising Shorthorns Owned by an Ontario Agricultural Society.

Members of the South Woodslee Agricultural Society, as may be learned from reading Mr. Cohoe's article adjoining, get benefits from their society in a real and tangible form, which they can and do appreciate. Their society owns 17 bulls and 13 boars which are distributed for the general use of its members. Can you tell what benefit you get from your society? Is it comparable with the benefits obtained by the members of South Woodslee?

to be insured at a cost of say \$50.00. This outlay would prevent us from buying any other animal for one year. This would be unsatisfactory in some parts of the society. If, however, the Act in Ontario governing agricultural societies could be amended so that a society could draw say 50 per cent. of the price of a stallion at the time of purchase and continue the pro-

sent grant thereafter it would certainly advance the horse industry very materially.

TOO MANY SOCIETIES HOLD FAIRS

As to agricultural societies generally there are too many. There are far too many holding fairs, however, and it is up to the officers of all societies to see that the money is spent in the interests of the agriculturists generally. A good successful fair is all right and is educative. There are, however, in my estimation, far too many small fairs that have outlived their usefulness and are located so near together that they turned a waste of time and money. Were these turned into pure bred stock societies they would materially benefit the whole farming community where they are situated. I

make this statement from actual experience. We have in this, the county of Essex, six societies holding fairs where two would be quite enough. If the others were stock societies it would be greatly to the advantage of the farming community. I am a supporter of one of these fairs; still, I candidly believe the farming community are receiving more financial benefit from our stock society than they do from all the fairs combined. As proof of this let me state that the minimum membership fee is \$2.00, and at our annual meeting there are almost invariably 200 subscriptions received, which shows that the working of this society is appreciated.

CONCERNING AN INCREASED GRANT

In conclusion, I would say to the officers of the different agricultural societies in Ontario, if you have good grounds and buildings and are holding a successful fair, stick to it; on the other hand, if your fair has outlived its usefulness, don't spend money on grounds and buildings, but take up the pure bred stock, and in after years the agriculturists in your community will appreciate what you have done. Furthermore, let me state that if one-half the societies that are now holding fairs would drop them and take up pure bred stock, the Legislature would not hesitate to increase the grant to agricultural societies, which increase they are fully entitled to if they spent it in the interests of agriculture only.

We have already commenced to give a little extra feed to the cows that will freshen in May. We find that the cows do better if in good flesh when they fresh-

en.—L. K. Shaw, Welland Co., Ont.

If we want a good dairy herd, we can sometimes go out and buy it. It is much better, however, to keep records and breed a good herd. We have then produced something that did not exist before.—Anson Grch, Waterloo Co., Ont.

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