

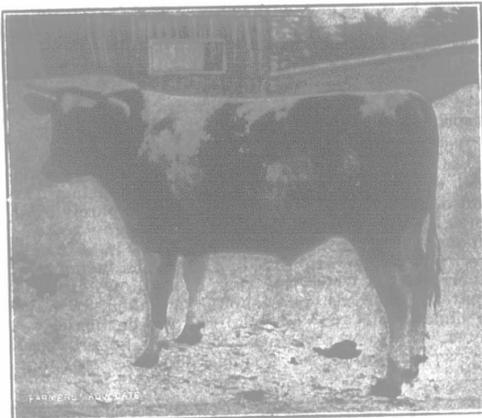
Winter Feeding of Beef Cattle.

The fact that either winter feeding or summer grazing of beef cattle has not been satisfactorily profitable for one season is no sure indication that the following year will necessarily show similar results. The markets for meats fluctuate, as do those for cereals and dairy products, and the next year may bring higher prices for one and lower for others. One of the lessons to be learned from an unfavorable year or a declining market is that the product of best quality finds the readiest buyers and brings the highest price. Another lesson is that the product most cheaply produced, the quality being equal, brings the most profit. Since few farmers who practice feeding beef cattle raise as many as they require to consume the winter feed, or the pasture they have, but depend upon buying a part or all the cattle they feed, it goes without saying that their profit or loss in the transaction depends largely on the class of stock purchased and the price at which they are bought. Were the feeder endowed with the necessary foresight to correctly predict market prices six months in advance he would be in a position to buy with a feeling of comparative safety, but while that gift is withheld he has to take chances in this line of business, as most men have in others, and the best thing he can do, having decided to buy, is to secure as good a class of cattle as he can, and at as low a price as he can buy that class; and then feed them as economically as possible while making sufficient gain in weight to have them in condition to bring the highest market price at the time he wishes to sell. Whether the outcome will spell profit or loss, or merely holding his own, will depend on his skill in feeding and condition of the market when he sells. The object of this article and of a series to follow is to endeavor to throw some light on the problems of buying and feeding cattle with a view to economy of production, in order to secure the best results, so far as the feeder can control the situation. One of the difficulties in securing the class of cattle one would choose to feed—and it is a somewhat serious difficulty—is the lamentable scarcity of well-bred, thrifty good-doing steers or heifers available in this country, owing to the neglect of farmers to use a good class of pure-bred bulls of the beef or dual-purpose breeds. The benefit of all concerned of improving the stock by this means is a lesson the average farmer has been deplorably slow to learn, despite the oft-repeated reminders of the market reports and of writers in farm papers. Under existing conditions, the best that can be done is to "take time by the forelock" and keep a look-out for possible bargains some time before the cattle are needed to put on feed, securing a good one or a few when they are found and can be bought right. If these cannot be secured near home, the next best thing—and sometimes it is the best—is to occasionally visit the cattle market in some good center, and keep a lookout for a carload of a useful sort not sufficiently finished for the export trade or the butcher, and that can be purchased at a price likely to allow a margin for profit on a few months' feeding. The railway companies, we understand, make special reduced freight rates on stock shipped out for feeding and returned to the market by their road, and the banks are generally willing to loan money to farmers on the security of the cattle when marketed. So that, if a man has a supply of fodder and other feed to be disposed of, and has not the ready cash to pay for the needed cattle to feed, he may, if willing to take the risk of borrowing money, market his feed through cattle to better advantage than he could in the raw state, and have at least a good stock of rich manure for his labor to increase the fertility of his land. And if he buys and feeds judiciously, the gain in weight of the cattle is likely to let him out safely, even though the price per pound at which he has to sell may be no higher than what he paid, and if it is a cent a pound more on the weight when purchased and the added weight, it is considered a fairly satisfactory result, while any price above this is regarded as a fortunate outcome.

The question whether it is likely to be more profitable to buy what may be called half-finished or short-keep feeders at a higher price, or thinner cattle requiring a longer term of feeding at a lower price, will depend largely upon the quality of the cattle in each case, the amount of feed on hand, and the date at which it is desired to sell. One thing in favor of the heavier cattle, and the early selling is that one may be in a position to sell at almost any time in case of a possible rise in the market price, and thus realize a gain profit, while the lighter cattle cannot be sold to advantage till they have been fed for a considerable time. In either case it is a mistake to buy unsuitable cattle; that is, a class that is not likely to be good feeders, to have a good weight, and give a good return for the feed they consume. The saying that "well bought is half sold" applies in this case more surely than in any other actions.

It requires but few words to describe the profitable feeding steer, but unless the buyer has been observant of the difference between good and common or scrub cattle in this respect, and has had some experience in handling the better class, he may make serious mistakes in his selections. He will be in danger of preferring size to quality, smoothness and thriftiness, and may find that he has a lot of cattle lacking in uniformity, of a bad type, and hard to sell to advantage. If he has not confidence in his own judgment, he may do well to enlist the assistance of an experienced buyer in whom he has confidence.

The good-feeding steer or heifer will show the characteristics of some one or more of the pure-bred beef breeds in color and conformation, will stand on short legs, will have short, broad head and a bright eye, a broad muzzle, a short, thick neck, a full brisket, smooth shoulders, well-sprung



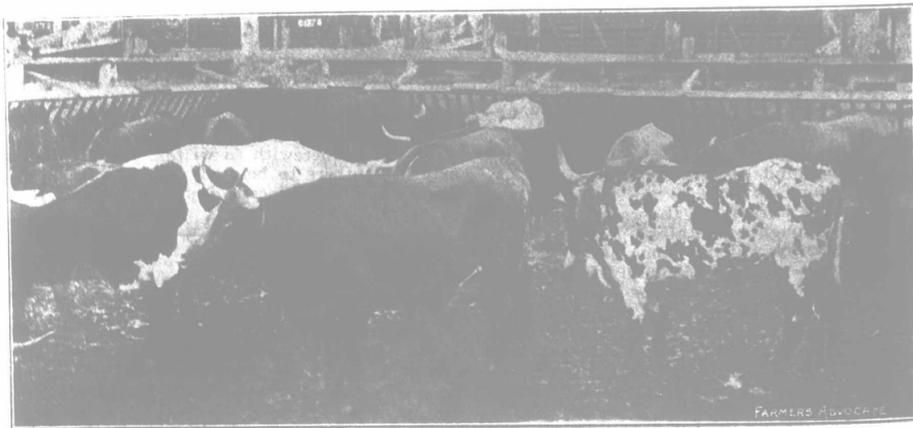
A Good Feeding Sort.

and deep ribs, a strong back and loin, long, level quarters, long thighs, well filled in at the junction or twist, will be thick through the heart, wide between the fore legs, the fore ribs and flank well let down, will have a good coat of soft-handling hair, a loose, soft-handling skin, and a quiet disposition.

A two-and-a-half-year-old steer of this description should weigh about 1,100 pounds in good, thrifty condition, coming off the pasture, or when put in the stable for winter feeding. The difference between the class of steer described and a common or a dairy-bred animal is that the former will lay on flesh of a good class rapidly on the back, loin and ribs, where the best cuts are found, and will make rapid gains in weight, while the other class will put but little flesh on his back, but will fill up inside with tallow, a low-selling product, and will never have the appearance that takes the eye of the buyer and brings the best price, but will have to be sold at one to two cents a pound less, while his gain in weight will also be much less than that of the beef-bred steer, and there is little chance of any profit on his feeding.

It is well to buy not later than November for winter feeding, as after the grass becomes frozen it is less nutritious, and the cattle are failing rather than gaining in condition, and this loss has to be made up before any gain can be made. However, we have seen cattle bought in the market in December which have made satisfactory gains when stabled and wisely fed.

The feed at first after stabling should be mainly roughage, as straw, hay and ensilage, with a moderate supply of roots or bran, or both, to be supplemented with a light meal ration after the first week or two, and gradually increased. The question of the advantage or otherwise of light versus heavy meal feeding and of balanced rations will be treated in a following article.



Unprofitable Feeders.

Shorthorn Registration.

To the Editor "Farmer's Advocate":

I beg to draw attention to the fact that entries for Volume 22 of the Herdbook will be closed on the 31st of December, 1905, and if breeders wish pedigrees to appear in that volume it would be advisable for them to send them in as soon as possible, when the applications will receive our prompt attention.

Volume 21 is now in press, and will be mailed to all entitled to same next month. It contains the pedigrees of 4,940 bulls, and 5,290 cows, or a total of 10,230; also a list of prizes (awarded at the different exhibitions which receive our grants), together with the names of the exhibitors and the names of the prize-winning animals.

Since the Record Office has been removed, a number of breeders have been enquiring as to the cost of registration. The fees have not been changed, and are as follows:

Fees, invariably in advance:

TO MEMBERS.	TO NON-MEMBERS.
For recording pedigree of each animal under 24 months \$0 75	For registration and certificate of each animal under 24 months \$1 25
For recording pedigree of each animal over 24 months 1 00	For registration and certificate of each animal over 24 months 1 75
Transfers, each 25	Old certificates exchanged for new forms, each 10
Duplicate certificates, each 25	Transfers, each 25
Old certificates exchanged for new forms, each 10	Duplicate certificates, each 25
Back volumes of herdbooks, each 2 00	
Membership fee, yearly 2 00	

All registration fees must accompany applications, and may be sent by postal note, post-office money order, registered letter, express money order, or marked cheque. Postage stamps will not be accepted.

New application blanks will be supplied free to all who apply.

A new form of registration certificate is now being issued (with the railway shipping vouchers attached). Send in the old certificates and they will be exchanged for the new form at the cost of 10 cents each.

Keep animals registered. It is a poor animal not worth the fee necessary to record its pedigree.

Always state on the application form the number or volume where the dam is recorded. It would also greatly aid, when forwarding pedigrees for registration, to write them legibly and correctly, and be careful to give every particular required on the application form. Before sending in pedigrees, their accuracy as to date of birth, color, name of breeder, owner, etc., should be carefully checked. No pedigree will be received unless made on the printed application form of the Association, and must be certified by the breeder, his accredited agent, or representative.

If care is taken in these points, much inconvenience, delay and correspondence will be avoided.

There are hundreds of breeders in every Province who are not as yet members of our Association. Note the small fee to join, \$2.00 per annum, which entitles the member to register animals at reduced rates, and if there are four animals to record in one year, enough will be saved to pay the membership fee. If not already a member, send in the name, and also tell neighbors of the advantage derived from being a member.

The Association has, since 1895, distributed prize money amounting to over \$25,000 at the leading exhibitions and winter fairs in the various provinces. The distribution of a liberal share of our surplus funds, in the form of prizes for the encouragement of a strong representation of the breed at the principal shows, has been beneficial to the fraternity in advertising the Shorthorn, thus keeping in the public view the merits of the greatest breed of cattle yet produced.

We are now numbering the females, so that each certificate is numbered as issued. If there is not a number on your certificate send it in, and we will put it on and return promptly.

All communications addressed to Accountant.