

A Visit With Peter Smith of Stratford

His Farm—His Farming—His Buildings and His Stock: As Seen by Tom Alfalfa

A FEW weeks ago the editor of Farm and Dairy was good enough to place in his special Exhibition Number a few paragraphs that I wrote him about the home generating light plant on the farm of our old friend, W. W. Ballantyne of Stratford. Incidentally, in that letter, I made mention of a neighbor of the Ballantynes, Mr. Peter Smith, who also has a home lighting plant—also a fine home to put it in, a fine farm and a herd of Holstein cattle that is recognized as one of the best in Perth County. As Mr. Smith lives just a couple of miles up the road from Neilds Path Farm, Mr. Ballantyne and I took a run up to see him—my host for a neighborly visit and I to renew old acquaintanceship.

Mr. Smith is big, jolly and likable. He takes a great interest in all the duties that go with his citizenship and has served in a public capacity in his home county. He entertains high hopes for the United Farmers of Ontario, and is always ready, if his work permits, to help organize a new branch of the U.F.O. or contribute to the program of an old one. His enthusiasm for farmers' organization work is almost as great as his admiration for Holstein cattle and quite as contagious. In that time, not so far in the future, when farmers will have their own representatives in Parliament, I would not be surprised if the farmers of Perth County were to pick Peter Smith and clothe him with the honors of an M.P. or an M.P.P. In fact, Mr. Ballantyne whispered something in my ear to this effect, while others proclaimed it aloud. Mr. Smith and I, however, talked about cows, crops and other subjects of mutual interest.

Perth is one of the real good agricultural counties of Western Ontario. I have always admired the great stretches of level rich land in the Ontario peninsula and have seen the most of it in the best way in the world—from our Ford car. I have found that Perth has its full share of good agricultural land and Peter Smith has 150 acres of it that is as good land as there is. It is all free of bush and the soil varies from a heavy to a medium heavy clay loam. It is laid out in big fields and is what one would call nowadays an ideal tractor farm, although, like myself, Mr. Smith still sticks to horses, working them in three and four-horse teams; that is, unless he has changed his mind and bought a tractor since I was talking with him. The farm is the original Smith homestead, which the present owner's grandfather chopped from the bush. I certainly commend Grandfather Smith's judgment in soil.

The Modern Barn.

One of the best features of Friend Smith's farm, aside from those with which nature endowed it, is his very modern barn. The fact that this barn was rebuilt from two old barns shows the possibilities of remodeling. The work was done in 1915. The original barn was 100 feet long by 40 feet wide with a basement under the entire structure. Mr. Smith moved another barn 40 feet square up against one



Francy 3rds Hartog 2nd, the Herd Sire at Clover Bar Farm.

corner of the larger barn and put a foundation under it. The big stable, therefore, has a cow barn 100 x 40 feet, and horse stable and box stalls 40 feet square. There are tie-ups for 42 head, arranged in two long rows in the main barn. In addition to the two rows of cattle, there is room along one side for box stalls for suckling calves. The rest of the calves are accommodated in the new calf barn close at hand.

I admired the interior arrangements. I like to see work done the easiest way; in fact, I am lazy enough to like to do it that way myself. Evidently Mr. Smith shares this weakness of the flesh. At the end of the stable nearest the house is a milkroom, where in are cooling tanks and a cream separator run with a small electric motor. At the opposite end of the stable is a feed room. Opening directly into this feed room is the chute from the big cement silo, 14 feet inside diameter and 70 feet high. Other chutes from the granary, the entrance to the root house and, finally, the hay chute, the latter enclosed to prevent the dust filling the stable atmosphere. One might almost say that all kinds of feed were "right on tap" in this feed room. When it comes to carrying the feed to the cows, a truck is preferred to the overhead carrier, in that it can be taken wherever the feeder desires, and perhaps, too, because it is a powerful stimulus toward keeping the feeding alleys clean. Manure is removed, however, with overhead carriers. A seven horse power engine sitting in the stable chowse grain, pumps water and runs the milking machine.

Remembering the hearty endorsement of the milking machine as per my friend Ballantyne, I asked Smith what he thought about it. "Well, I have just had the machine for 18 months," he told me, "and we like it very well. Some of the cows milk out perfectly with the machine, others not so well. It depends on the cows. The same is true when you milk by hand."

When he fixed up his stables, Mr. Smith made a permanent job of it. The floors and mangers are all of concrete. The equipment, even to the partitions in the calf stalls, is of steel. It is as modern

as a stable as they have in the new dairy barn at Guelph, which I can visit frequently as this institution is only sixteen miles from home. Equipment such as this, however, demands considerable cash. There are two other features of the Smith stable that might very well be duplicated everywhere. The lighting is of the best. Between one-third and one-half of the linear wall length is in window glass and the windows are those little shallow sashes stuck up against the ceiling. The bottoms are just high enough above the floor that there is no danger of the cattle backing into them or sticking their heads through and they extend right to the ceiling. The smaller sash at the top is on hinges, swinging downwards and inwards. These sashes permit the regulation of the flow of fresh air into the stable. In the centre of the stable there is a large ventilating shaft, which carries the foul air to the roof. "There is none of that foulness in the stable in the morning when you open the door," remarked Mr. Smith, and he further assured me that the stable walls, which are of stone plastered over smoothly with cement, are always dry. These walls are whitewashed as frequently as appearances demand, the ceiling is of matched lumber and painted.



Minnie Paladin Wayne, a Good Three-year-old. She has an R. O. M. test of 26.84 lbs. of butter in 7 days as a three-year-old. As related by Tom Alfalfa, in the article adjoining, Mr. Smith purchased the grandmother of this cow for \$23 many years ago.

Outside the barn is painted red and with a big cement silo at one corner presents a properly imposing appearance.

The Dairy Herd.

"We have always been dairymen on this farm to quite a considerable extent," said Mr. Smith, when I asked him about his herd. "We started out with Holstein grades about 30 years ago. It is about 25 years since we bought our first pure bred. We didn't put any value on pure breeds then and many a time we thought of giving up registering the offspring, but some way or other we held on and now we are mighty glad we did."

I could understand Mr. Smith's satisfaction with their perseverance. If I remember rightly the grade cow which captured the sweepstakes at Guelph a year ago was a purebred from a herd where registration had been neglected. I am told that there have been a number of such herds over Ontario and it would have been a shame if the Smith herd had been added to the list. Mr. Smith told me that he bought his first two-year-old heifer at a sale for \$23 and she was a good one. In fact, she is grand-dam of a young cow now in the herd, Minnie Paladin Wayne, with a Record of Merit test of 26.84 lbs. of butter in seven days in her three-year-old form.

The milking herd had just then come to the barnyard from the pasture and I had a chance to look them over. As a whole they were a bunch of fine big cows. A few years ago they promised to make a name for themselves in yearly test work. Now, however, the more convenient seven-day test is being followed exclusively and creditable records have been made. The ability of the herd to produce for long periods is amply proven by the fact that the cows are profitable on a straight commercial basis and

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This Barn with its Up-to-date Stabling is the Result of Remodelling Old Barns.

The main barn is 100 by 40 feet; the ell, which was an old barn moved up, is 40 x 40. Notice the provision for stabling and the cupola, connected with shafts to the stable, for ventilation. A coat of paint adds to the appearance and makes the old barn look like new. On the farm of Peter Smith, Perth Co., Ont. All photos courtesy of Mr. Smith.