

## THE DAIRY.

### Springtime With the Dairy Herd.

Editor "The Farmer's Advocate":

The condition of the dairy herd in the spring is the test of a feeder's ability during the winter. If the cows, heifers and calves are in "the pink of condition" when the warm weather comes, then the feeder, or attendants, have been "on to their job". If, however, the cows have rough and staring coats, with thick, hard hides, and a general appearance of thinness, or what one dairyman has called having the appearance of suffering from "hollow-belly", the herd says, in words unmistakable that someone has blundered. The heifers should be thrifty but not overfat, and the calves bright and lively showing no sign of "scours", which is so debilitating on young stock.

The writer visited two herds recently that were in fine condition. One of these was a pure-bred herd and the other a grade herd where they use a pure-bred sire. If anything, the grade herd was in the better condition indicating that a man on an ordinary farm by using a prepotent dairy sire may have a herd in a short time that for all practical purposes is as good as a pure-bred herd and so far as appearance and to a large extent performance, goes, fully equal to animals with pedigrees.

I wish to speak more particularly of the grade herd and the method of management, as this will be more interesting to a larger proportion of readers who are unable to keep registered stock, although we think every dairyman should aim at a pure-bred herd finally. By the way, for the man whose capital is limited, we should advise buying a few females that are not pedigreed and work up the herd from these by the use of a registered sire, rather than risk a lot of possibly borrowed money, invested in stock, which may be easily lost, as I know of no one way in which a man without experience, can drop money faster than by buying stock which he does not know how to handle in order to obtain the best results. In saying this we are not "knocking" the pure-bred stock business, in which we have much faith, but are throwing out a word of caution, more especially to young dairy farmers who have more ambition than capital.

Coming back to the grade herd. The time of my visit was the latter part of April after an unusually warm spell of weather. The day was warm, with a storm threatening. On reaching the farm we found all the herd, except the young calves, out of doors in paddocks, where they could enjoy the fresh air and sunshine, while at the same time the stable was being aired by having all the doors and windows open. On entering the stable there was an absence of that heavy, impure, water-closet smell, so common in cow-stables. There are stables that one cannot remain in for half-an-hour, without the clothing becoming saturated with an odor that is very objectionable. Yet these stables may look clean.

In a few minutes after our arrival the cows were brought in from the paddock. Each cow was numbered and each stall was also numbered. The whole herd of nearly 100 head was put into their stalls in a few minutes without any of the fuss, or hallooing, or help of dogs, such as is common on many farms when the cows are first returned to the stable after being outside. After the cows were safely tied, the yearling heifers were brought in, then the stock bull. They were certainly a fine, healthy-looking, uniform lot of cattle. The skin and hair fairly shone with signs of health. The stock was not fat, because fatness is not necessarily a sign of health, but they were in good working condition.

The main bulky feed during the past winter was corn silage and mangels, with meal in addition for the milkers, but the meal ration was comparatively light—4 to 8 lbs. per cow daily, with some extra for the cows giving 60 to 70 lbs. milk daily. The striking point about the herd was the appearance of health and thrift which characterized each and all animals in the herd.

Now as to the history of this herd, because it has a very valuable lesson for the dairy farmer with small means. I do not think confidence will be betrayed, if we give the main facts of the case without mentioning names, as the owner does not, I am sure, desire too much publicity.

The herd was established about five years ago, by the purchase of about 100 yearling heifers, which were bought in a well-known dairy section. These heifers delivered, cost less than twenty-five dollars each. Owing to the fact that the new stables were not ready, these heifers were wintered the first year and part of the second, in the old, badly lighted and badly ventilated stables which were on the farm when purchased, but just such stables as are all too common on dairy farms today—what are commonly known as "bank-

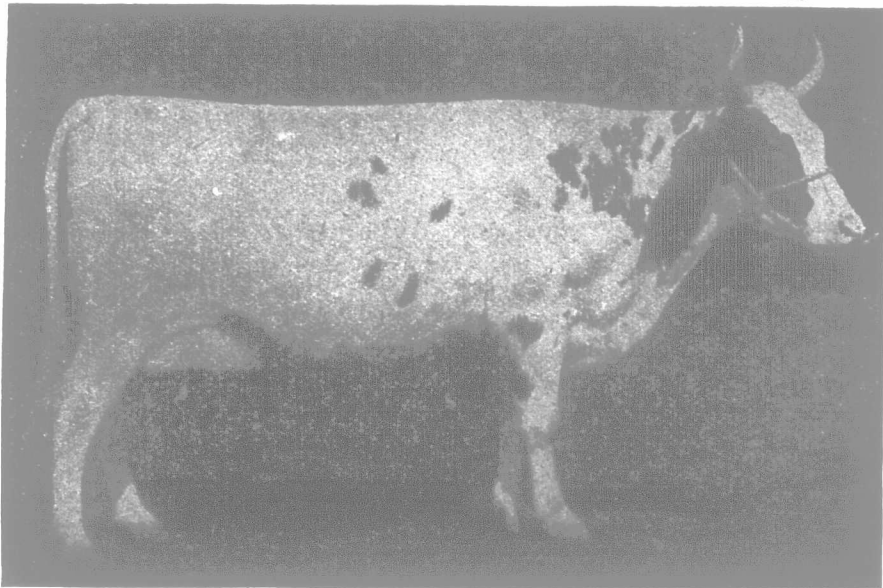
barn" stables which in many cases are such excellent places for the tuberculosis germs to thrive. A number of these heifers proved to be "reactors" to the tuberculin test and were not allowed to enter the new stable. However, their heifer calves were saved, and fed on non-reactors' milk in the new barn. None of these calves proved to be reactors when tested at about two years of age, and there have been few, if any, tuberculous cows in the herd since established in their new quarters. The whole herd show signs of health and vigor such as is not often seen in so large a number of cows. The heifers and calves also indicate healthful appearance in every way, showing that this vigor and healthful condition is transmissible and can be maintained in the coming generations, if due precautions are taken.

I fancy the practical man, asking, what about the milk production? Are these cows any good at the pail?

The milk records of this herd showed that they were good producers. The weight of milk given by each cow varied from 8,000 to over 12,000 lbs. for the last lactation period, which may be considered very good, especially when we remember their rather humble origin, and the fact that the animals cost originally less than \$25 each. If the herd were put under the hammer to-day they would easily average \$100 each—probably more, as there were some cows that would bring \$150 quite readily at an auction sale in a dairy section where cows are properly valued.

Two very important lessons, at least, may be learned by the experiences with this herd:

1. That a healthy, profitable dairy herd may be built-up in a comparatively short time and at very little expense by the rearing or purchase of grade heifers. If a man is a shrewd, careful buyer and has some capital of his own he may easily make ten per cent. per annum on his investment in three to five years. There is apparently a good opening for a number of dairy cattle men to rear young cows for sale, as the



A Winning Ayrshire at the Ayr Show, Scotland.

demand for milkers of good type and quality is practically unlimited, at prices which will well repay the cost of rearing this class of dairy stock.

2. A clean, healthy herd can be maintained by simple precautions and care, which may be carried out on any dairy farm at small cost. We need clean, light, well-ventilated stables for our dairy stock and the stock needs to get outside in the fresh air and sunshine as much as possible. In addition, the tuberculin test should be used, the "reactors" separated from the healthy animals, and the calves from the latter to be removed at once from their dams and be reared on milk from healthy cows, or milk which has been pasteurized.

By so doing we should add to the comfort and safety of humans who depend so largely on milk as a food, and in the long run our dairy herds would be more profitable, though there might be some heavy losses on the start, should a large percentage of the animals in the herd prove to be "reactors". The welfare of the human race demands that the sacrifice be made, but it requires united action in order to be effective. Up to the present, this has not been possible or practicable in a large measure in America.

O. A. C.

H. H. DEAN.

Sandy Fraser accuses British and Canadian journalists of laying too much stress upon German atrocities, and not enough upon the bravery and fighting qualities of the Allied troops.

Where the grain crops were not too far advanced a trip over the rain-crusted fields with a weeder or light harrow has been found a wholesome form of soil culture, letting in air and warmth, and preserving moisture that later on may be needed.

## HORTICULTURE.

### Renovating Old Strawberry Fields.

The question regarding the renovation of old strawberry patches has never been settled definitely amongst growers. Some believe it is cheaper and more profitable to plant a new field each year, while others renovate the field after each crop and take what they claim to be two or three profitable, consecutive crops.

Renovation consists in mowing off the old foliage and encouraging new growth. One system which we have seen to work very well is to mow the foliage with a mowing machine, the bar of which is tilted upwards enough so the guards will not dig into the ground. The grass and leaves may either be raked off and burned or burned on the patch. When burned without raking the grower should light his fire on the windward side and when there is a strong gale blowing. The slow burning of the foliage on top of the plants will tend to injure the crowns. With a strong gale the fire runs speedily, and the heat will not become intense enough to do any severe damage. Where danger is feared the leaves and grass may be raked between the rows and burned or taken entirely from the field. Following this a lout between each two rows with a cultivator will quite loosen up the soil, but in most instances it is necessary to use the plough. One or two furrows ploughed towards the centre of the space between the rows will loosen the soil and at the same time narrow the width of the row. This system of renovation is, of course, applicable chiefly to the matted-row system of growing berries, and in this case the row will vary in width between twelve and sixteen inches. After the ploughing is done a spiked-tooth harrow with the teeth slanting backwards should be brought into service. Harrow first lengthwise of the row and

then crosswise. This will work up the soil between the rows and scatter it over the plants themselves. New growth will then start and the patch of berries will appear quite new.

It is a good time, while cultivation is being carried on, to fertilize the field if any fertilization is necessary. It has been the custom sometimes to use about 100 pounds of nitrate of soda per acre. Well-rotted manure would answer the purpose very well. Either one would force new growth so desirable at this time. With proper mulching, the plant as it stands after renovation will come through the winter all right and produce a fair crop of berries the succeeding year.

As many as three crops per acre have been taken from one field where the matted-row system is followed, but generally speaking, the second crop is about the limit of profitable production.

### Caring for the Strawberry Crop.

It requires no small amount of intelligence, persistence and labor to grow a profitable crop of strawberries, but these same attributes are still valuable during harvesting. Berries are a perishable crop at the best, and without skillful supervision the profits may be small indeed. On the other hand a well-managed patch of berries in a favorable season is a money maker.

The following rules regarding handling and picking strawberries in force in a Western fruit exchange are printed in a bulletin entitled, "Strawberry Culture in Wisconsin," and compiled by J. G. Moore, of the Experiment Station in that State: 1. Berries must not be picked while there is moisture on plants. 2. Berries should be picked all over, or three-fourths red. 3. Berries should be picked ripe in cool weather than in warm. 4. A picker must not be allowed to hold more than one or two berries in his hand at the same time. 5. Filled carriers must not be allowed to stand in the sun. 6. Berries must be picked with a stem a quarter of an inch long and not longer or shorter. 7. Sort out all green, over-ripe, misshapen and small berries. 8. No culls in boxes, put in nothing but fair-sized berries. 9. Use clean crates and keep from being soiled. 10. Haul in spring wagon and cover to keep out the dust.

To some growers these may appear like a formidable list of instructions, but the berries are known and brought under the name of the exchange which has a reputation to maintain, and