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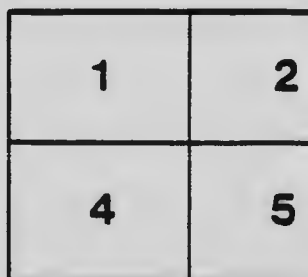
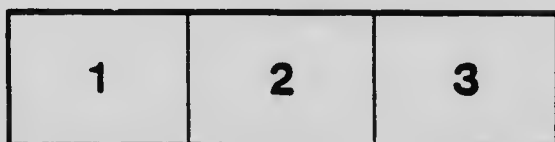
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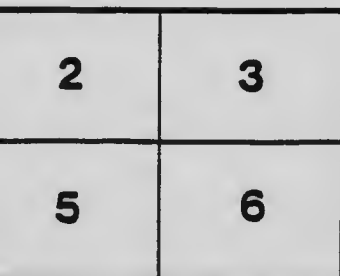
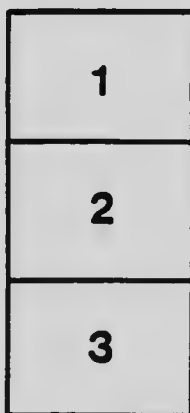
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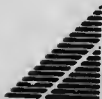
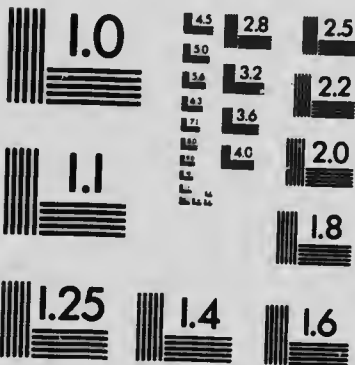
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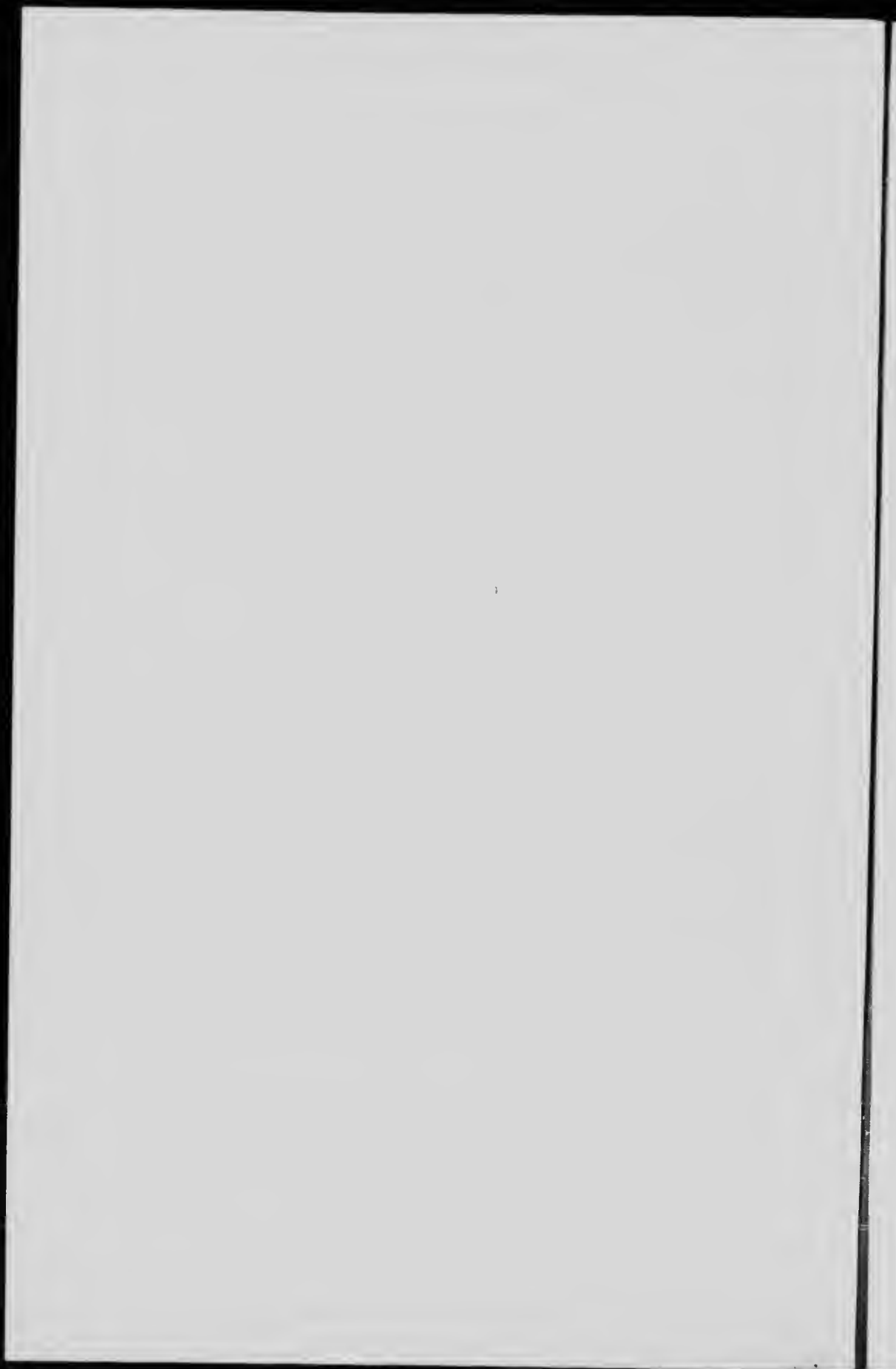
KEEP THE HEIFERS AT HOME

PAMPHLET No. 20

Published by Direction of the Hon. Martin Burrell, Minister
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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

LIVE STOCK BRANCH

OTTAWA - - CANADA

FINISH THE FEEDERS IN CANADA
KEEP THE HEIFERS AT HOME

BY

JOHN BRIGHT

LIVE STOCK COMMISSIONER

AND

H. S. ARKELL

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER

LEGEND has the fable of a goose that laid a golden egg. The moral of the story may have many applications. If we would profit by its teaching, we will do well to guard more jealousy the safety of the natural resources of Canada than did the keeper in his care of the fabled bird of history.

Canada has no source of wealth more dependable, more profitable or more permanent than that represented in her flocks and herds. The cows and heifers of this country are the potential parent of a product that is as valuable to the Dominion and to the Empire as the traditional golden egg. As a war measure the British Government has already imposed restrictions against the slaughter of calves and females. It had been felt that Canada did not need the adoption of legislation as a practical measure to obtain this end. It must be pointed out, however, that we are continuously facing the danger involved in the loss of large numbers of good beef calves, in the slaughter of very many breedy and serviceable heifers and cows, and in the exportation annually from the country of thousands of stockers and feeders.

CALVES.

This fact suggests a drain upon our resources that, at the present moment, the country cannot afford to ignore. Consider the almost wanton destruction of our calves. A hundred-pound calf is a thousand-pound steer in embryo. Kill the calf and you net but a fifty- or sixty-pound delicacy for the table of an epicure. Kill the steer and you provide five or six hundred pounds of substantial beef for the upbuilding of the manhood of Europe. Canada cannot view without serious concern the killing of its beef calves. The country wants the six hundred, not the sixty. It will be counted against us if we fail to utilize the provender, grass, hay, straw, and grain that otherwise is annually uselessly lost on the Western prairies. Such illustrates the difference between waste and thrift. We fully recognize that a considerably larger

number of calves, than was formerly the case, are now being retained for the purposes of breeding and feeding. Nevertheless, a glance at the following figures will indicate pretty clearly that an immense dividend to the country could be salvaged by returning to the farm large drafts of carefully selected calves from the numbers that continue regularly to find their way to the big central markets.

Calves Marketed in Canada.

1914.....	103,269
1915.....	125,556

COWS.

What about the slaughter of the females? Just so we kill the goose that lays the golden egg. Barren heifers, worn out cows can find no better destination. Good husbandry is intolerant of drones, while to those which have generously served their generation it provides a useful end. But cattle capable of rearing offspring represent an asset to their owner and to the country which may easily be recognized as constituting one of the most important factors in the business development of the Dominion. Nature is prodigal of her gifts, but deals hardly with those who are improvident in their use.

It cannot but furnish food for thought, therefore, when we observe the number of heifers and young cows of excellent type which are sold to the local butcher or find their way to the central markets for immediate slaughter at the abattoirs. It will be agreed that conditions which require or permit the sale and slaughter of such cattle ought, in the interest of the country, to be counterbalanced by an alternative demand which will ensure that they yield to civilization the service for which nature designed them. A fuller appreciation of the present value of breeding stock ought undoubtedly to assist in preventing its sale from the farms or at least in holding it in the country.

The homesteader will add to the comforts of his family, decrease his living expenses and very materially strengthen his financial position in dealing with his banker, by having and breeding a few cows. The mixed farmer has already learned his lesson and is demonstrating its truth in all the Western provinces. He may now, however, with advantage to himself, add to his holdings wherever such is possible.

In the ranching business one of the greatest drawbacks has been the insufficiency of winter feed. Heavy losses in the breeding herd can largely be eliminated by careful provision in this direction. The man who neglects it is doing himself and the whole community an injury. It will perhaps be admitted as a fact that present conditions on the range necessitate an expenditure of capital and labour which was not formerly required. An adjustment, therefore, of methods of management will make possible a more extensive use of range land and thus ensure considerably greater production in the range herd. The rancher may well contribute his share to the upbuilding of our live stock industry by the systematic practice of a policy tending toward this end.

From another point of view, the grain farmer is being induced to consider the returns from cattle as compared with the returns from wheat. The argument in favour of stock farming has become more insistent, as experience has indicated its real significance. The expansion of cattle raising in this direction represents a field which has hardly yet been touched. Its extension to grain farms will, besides conserving the resources of the land, lead to the elimination of an enormous amount of waste in feed and at the same time add very greatly to the live stock output of the country. If such a policy were developed, breeding cattle would be at a premium in Western Canada. There will be few who will suffer through the development of such a movement.

FEEDERS.

There remains to consider the exportation of our stockers and feeders. This business has apparently grown up since the advent of the herd laws, when homesteaders and farmers have locally found themselves, in the late summer and early fall, short of grass. As a result, large numbers of young two-year-old stuff have been dumped on the market at a period when they tend ordinarily to about the lowest level of the year. Unfortunately, as this movement grew, there did not develop any parallel demand for feeders within the country. At the moment, therefore, it would seem to have meant disaster to our cattle business, had there not sprung up an alternative market for this class of cattle in Minnesota, North Dakota, Montana, and other States of the Union. In 1915, there were exported from Western Canada to the United States 96,499 head. Of this number probably 70 per cent were stockers and feeders. At least such was the proportion as between these and the total number exported through the Winnipeg Stock Yards. That is to say, Canada lost in the neighbourhood of 70,000 potential butcher or export cattle through this outlet, notwithstanding that we had at the time, taking the country as a whole, the necessary feed and to spare.

Is this good business? We think not. Owing to the slump in prices, on account of big shipments during the early fall months, all that the farmer is usually able to realize for his stocker stuff is from four and a half to five cents a pound. It will be understood that we speak of previous seasons' experience. For very good material he may get more, while for anything under average there is very slow sale. Present advices from St. Paul state that for the time being, the stocker and feeder market is slow owing to the hot weather damaging the pastures over a wide area and on account of the rush of harvest work. It may be accepted as a fact that the period in question is anything but a good selling season. In other words, the farmer is obliged to take less than his cattle are intrinsically worth.

This is clearly indicated when it is borne in mind that the feeder, which nets the Canadian farmer but five cents a pound, costs the American cattleman practically seven cents to put into his feed lot. The two cents difference is absorbed in speculative profits, transportation charges and commission fees. The Canadian farmer has at his disposal millions of tons of roughage which are wasted every year and very great quantities of coarse grain which are annually sold to the nearest elevator at a very low price. He would appear to have a great advantage over the American cattleman who has to operate on high priced land with a large investment in feeding plant and whose feeds cannot be had as cheaply as in this country. Nevertheless, the American farmer puts in his cattle at seven cents a pound and admittedly makes money. Under these circumstances, it will be a pity if Western Canada lets such an opportunity pass from her control.

By way of illustration it may be pointed out that a similar situation has been in evidence for years in Eastern Canada in connection with the lamb trade. Periodically, during the month of September or early October lambs are rushed to market and, of course, meet the regular and, at times, spectacular drop in price. A six cent price level in September has frequently risen to an eight or nine cent level in January. Last year lambs sold on the Toronto market in October for 8½ cents a pound, while in February the quotation had risen to 12½ cents a pound.

Moreover, thousands of lambs have regularly been shipped out from Ontario to Buffalo and other United States points in the fall months, at the price then current, while many carloads have been imported in the spring from Chicago or elsewhere, at the customary high level of the spring market. Do we really prefer to sell cheap and buy dear? Whether in the case of lambs in the East or of feeders in the West, such a policy will represent a losing business for our farmers. Until we are able to regulate our marketings by a closer study of market movements and market prices, we shall make little progress or profit in the development of our live stock trade.

We are glad to be able to state that, while some cattle have already gone south, the stocker and feeder movement, during the first seven months of this present year, has been in favour of Western Canada. The bumper grain crop of 1915 has provided sufficient ready cash to enable our own farmers to finance the feeding of more cattle. The demand for stocker stuff from the Canadian West appears to be keen and strong. Owing to the plentiful rainfall this spring, the hay crop will be considerably above the average. While during the past years the hot seasons have burned the pastures badly, the grass on the prairies has revived very greatly this season and has developed a root such as it has not had for five years. With the feed situation developing in such a promising way, it is very evident that a confident attitude is being taken as regards the prospects for cattle feeding. With such a showing as now appears both for fodder and for grain, it is a safe guess that the man who markets it through his live stock will find himself in a pretty strong position at the end of the game.

THE CANADIAN MARKET.

It may not be understood by everybody that the Canadian market locally and through the position we hold in relation to the Mother Country is likely to furnish us profitable or even more profitable outlet for our finished product than that to be found through United States channels. On the very best authority, it can be stated that sales last year on the Chicago market of finished Canadian range cattle were disappointing. Large shippers admitted that better results could have been obtained had they offered their stuff upon the Canadian market. As a matter of fact, Canada is developing a useful and lucrative trade with Great Britain and with France. It is only during the fall months, however, that there is an exportable surplus of cattle in this country. During the remaining months our packers have been obliged, in order to maintain their trade, to import large quantities of American beef and have found it profitable to do so. Not unlikely some of this was Canadian beef returned to our markets after a pretty costly finishing process during which the cream of the profits have been absorbed but in which the Canadian farmer, Canadian capital and Canadian labour had no share. What an advantage it would have been to the farmers of the Prairie Provinces had they retained and fed at home the feeders they exported last fall!

The efforts of every citizen should be determinedly directed to the expansion and upbuilding of our own industries. If it is ever to amount to anything, our live stock business must rest upon its own initiative as regards the development of its trade. It can never be profitable in the fullest degree if permitted to become subsidiary to business interests that have no concern as regards the future of the Dominion. It may as well be recognized that the prosperity of the Canadian farmer is linked up with the prosperity of capital and labour engaged in allied or related industries. If Canadian commerce does not expand, the farmer loses the benefit of a fair home market. If Canadian railways do not prosper, they may easily become a tax upon the whole community. We can build up in this country a great meat industry. Useful foundations have already been laid. That it can be made a very profitable business to the whole country no one can doubt. It must, however, receive the systematic and organized support of all the controlling units engaged in every phase of our home and export trade.

THE MARKET PROSPECT.

The entire country believes that, as regards live stock, we will do wisely to increase our productive capacity to the fullest possible extent. No one doubts that during the period of the war all available beef will be in strong demand and that cattle prices will be high. What may happen following the declaration of peace is

more problematical, but the most eminent authorities point out that after the great wars of history there has always been an abnormal demand for all kinds of live stock. A prominent United States statistician makes the statement that "all branches of the live stock market are in a strong position statistically. There will be neither gluts nor bargain sales during the coming summer. Consumption has got so far ahead of production that the position of those who breed and finish cattle, hogs and sheep is secure It is a case of not enough to go round nor will there be enough for many years to come. A herd of breeding cows and a place to keep them are good assets and the matron capable of producing a husky calf at weaning time will make good returns for the feed she consumes, plus a rate of interest that ought to interest capital There will be no cheap stock cattle and the man who raises his own will probably always hold the thick end of the stick."

In any event, in Canada, in the United States and in Europe there is a confidence in the future of the live stock trade, the like of which has not been experienced for a lifetime. That country will be very fortunate which, by the careful husbanding and utilization of its resources, achieves the position of being able to wholesomely and prudently expand its output during the succeeding years. Canada may easily place herself in the way of attaining a very powerful place in the export meat business if a determined policy of expanding production is systematically practised. No one doubts our resources in feed or in land or climate. The breed foundation and type of our cattle are not to be excelled. We cannot then afford to ignore or to waste our opportunity.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT.

It has been recognized that in a campaign of this nature the attitude which the banks may be prepared to take in the matter of live stock credits becomes of very vital importance to the success of the movement. At the request of the Canadian Bankers' Association of Western Canada and with the approval of the Minister, the Live Stock Commissioner and the Assistant Commissioner attended a conference with the members in Winnipeg. While the discussion was of a very informal nature, the most important features of the situation were carefully considered. With an appreciative understanding of present conditions, the association expressed the desire to actively co-operate in the efforts which are being put forth in varying directions to increase production and expand Canada's live stock trade. The result of the conference was the appointment of a committee of members who should constitute a medium through which a more active and clearly defined propaganda in this direction could be entered upon. The Department whose officers are concerned not only with the question of production but with that of markets proposes to keep in close touch with developments and to secure and disseminate necessary information in the hope of being able to assist in co-ordinating the efforts which the banks are prepared to make in general support of this movement, and will endeavour to enlist as far as possible the support and co-operation of the packing and transportation companies.

THE TURN OF THE TIDE.

Unquestionably the opportune time has come when an effective move may be made to offset the serious drain upon our resources as represented in the loss of our beef calves, in the slaughter of breeding females and in the exportation of our stockers and feeders. It will be conceded also that the time has arrived when Canada may venture upon the active development of a comprehensive export meat trade, with fair and reasonable promise of success. This means that, in the first place, it is the business of every farmer to contribute his quota in expanding the production of the

country. Under these circumstances, we strongly recommend owners to feed as many of their own cattle as they can, provided, of course, that they have available sufficient supplies of fodder and grain to insure full gains in the cattle they keep. When this is not possible, we would recommend buyers and commission men to encourage those who have practical experience in the cattle feeding business to add to their holdings by purchases from those that are offered for sale locally or on the central markets.

We would again urge the retaining for breeding purposes of every suitable healthy female, old or young. To develop and hold business, we must increase our stock. Therefore, save the heifers, spare the calves, keep the cows—these are amongst the most valuable products of Canada. Breed always to a good bull. Carefully rear the young. Feed the growing stock a full ration. Fatten the bullocks until ready for any market.

Energetic work directed along these lines will not only bring substantial personal rewards, but will constitute an important factor in placing the production and trade of Canada on a sound and permanent basis.



