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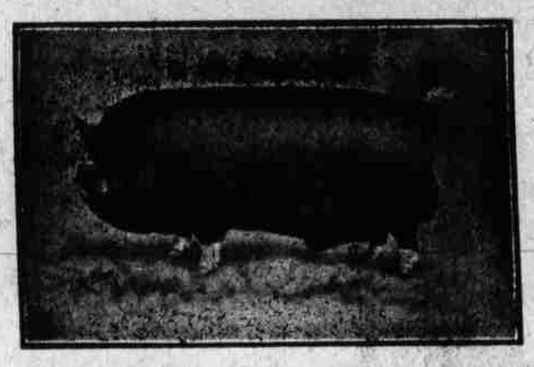

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# LIVE STOCK AND DAIRY.

## THE BREEDS OF CATTLE.

### IV—The Herefords and Their Place in Southern Stock Breeding.

By Tait Butler.

HEREFORDS. This breed, as its name indicates, originated in Herefordshire, England. Hereford cattle were probably first imported to this country by Henry Clay, in 1817, but it was not until about 1880 that they became generally popular. Since then they have held a leading place on the ranges of the West and have increased in popularity until today they occupy a prominent place among the special beef breeds of this country.

**Color.**—In color they are uniformly red and white. The white markings are striking and characteristic. The head, top of neck, dewlap, brisket, belly, front feet, hind legs below the hocks, and brush of the tail are white, and sometimes the back or other parts of the body may also show white. All other parts are red. The shade of red varies considerably, but the most desirable is a medium shade; that is, one neither too dark nor too light. The ears are usually spotted or pure red and red spots are also frequently seen on the head around the eyes. The coat of hair is thick and inclined to curl, especially in winter.

**Size.**—The size of the Hereford is large. It is little, if any, inferior to the short-horn. Bulls weigh, quite frequently from 2,000 pounds to 2,400 pounds and cows upwards of 1,500 pounds.

**Form.**—In general form the Hereford is not so smooth, round and compact as the Aberdeen-Angus, nor is the box or square outlines of the Shorthorns quite reached, but they are low and wide.

The greatest Hereford weakness, as relates to form, have been an excessive development in dewlap and brisket and a lack of fullness and smoothness in thighs and rump. The rump, too often, is uneven and lacks fullness, while the thighs are not only thin but lack depth. Both these defects have been largely improved by the breeding of recent years, but they probably still constitute the chief Hereford defects in form.

The neck is generally very smooth and beautifully blended with the shoulder, which is usually well covered with flesh. This impressive front and the fact that no other breed shows a spring and depth of rib and a length and breadth of loin superior to the Hereford, give him high rank as a beef maker. In fact, probably no beef breed usually piles up such a wealth of flesh on back and loin, which are very important points in a beef animal.

**Grazers.**—No breed has been as popular on the ranges as the Herefords. They have splendid feet and legs and a disposition which impels them to an active life when occasion demands. They are not as quiet and docile as the Shorthorn in confinement, but on the range their rustling qualities enable them to build up good frames and develop into good feeders.

In quality, as indicated by a fine coat, a mellow elastic skin, and good, hard bone and in constitutional vigor as constituted by his depth of chest, the Hereford has no superior.

The Hereford crosses well with other breeds or with grades or the common stock. The white face seems to be a strongly fixed characteristic; crosses between Hereford and Aberdeen-Angus frequently come black and hornless, but showing the full white face. As meat producers Herefords have taken high rank at the fat stock shows of this country and England. The flesh is well marbled and fairly well distributed, especially thick fleshing of the back and loin being characteristic. They also dress out a high per cent of carcass, but in these respects, especially in small per cent of waste in carcass to the retail butcher, they are, along with all other breeds, inferior to the Angus.

The range qualities of the Herefords as shown in the West and particularly the Southwest have given them high recommendation for adaptation to Southern conditions, where pastures are not generally good. Possibly, on our more or less scanty pastures the Herefords will grow better frames than the other beef breeds and make a superior class of feeders, but they can not make flesh and bone without feed, and unless sufficient feed is furnished are certain to lose their large size and other strong beef producing qualities.

In milk production, the Herefords take a low rank. Plumb, in his "Types and Breeds of Farm Animals," says: "No class of breeders carry so many nurse cows on the show circuit as do the Hereford men." While they are strictly special-purpose beef animals, they may usually be relied upon to give sufficient milk to raise their calves well.

AN IDEALIZED HEREFORD. Courtesy C. R. Thomas.

### Polled Herefords.

Polled Herefords have been developed, but have never become popular or numerous. They differ little from the standard Herefords in color, markings and general characteristics, but in the development of this hornless variety more attention seems to have been given to the dual-purpose idea, and as the progenitor of these polled animals was a freak cross between a Hereford-Shorthorn cow and a pure-bred Hereford bull, they seem to be better milkers than the standard animals. Freaks, or hornless Herefords, as they sometimes occur, have also been used in trying to develop this hornless breed or variety, but they have never taken any prominence among the breeds of cattle of any section of the country.

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When I used the tuberculin test in my herd ten years ago and killed seven animals, completely banishing the disease, I was met with ridicule from my brother farmers. An annual test for eight years has failed to find a single reaction. Although this policy has been worth thousands of dollars to me in the sale of registered cattle, very many of them cannot see it.—W. D. Hoard.

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