

# THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER

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### ANIMALS THAT "EAT THEIR HEADS OFF."

EVERY Progressive Farmer reader has heard of such animals; most readers have seen such; some, we fear, have owned such. Indeed, there are many more such animals in the land than most farmers think; and every such animal—every horse, or cow, or pig which does not do enough labor, give enough milk, put on enough flesh to pay for the feed consumed and the care received by it—is a positive injury to its owner. Let's look at a few examples.

Some time ago Prof. J. F. Duggar wrote us about some farms on which the mules worked only 65 days in a year. Prof. Duggar figured that each day's work done by one of these mules cost \$1.53. There are many farms on which mules are kept

a whole year for 95 days' work. Each one of these day's work costs the owner of the mules a dollar. These mules are "eating their heads off," for the mule adds to the farm profits only when he labors.

No reasonable man would blame the mules for this failure to pay their board. They were there waiting for work to do. The fault was clearly with the owners who arranged—or disarranged—their farming so that the work-stock was left idle most of the year. It is safe to say, too, that on these farms—every reader knows what was raised on them and how they were managed—there were times when more mules were badly needed. These farmers made the mistake of trying to put a whole farm into one crop, a whole year's farming into five or six months.

Take another example: There are thousands of cows that do not produce 150 pounds of butter-fat in a year. Some of them fail because they are too poorly fed to do it; many others fail simply because they are not "that kind of cow"—because they have not been bred for milk production, and simply cannot convert enough feed into milk to pay for their upkeep. Every such cow as this in a dairy herd decreases her owner's profits instead of increasing them; and the owner is simply making himself poor working to feed that cow.

Yet it is folly to blame the old cow. She is doing the best she can for herself; and it isn't her business to think for her owner. It is his business to get the scales and a milk-testing outfit and find out what

the cow is doing. If she is living on his labor, the thing for her is to go first to the fattening pen and then to the slaughter-house.

One more example: In some places one can see hogs in bare lots or in little dirty pens waiting patiently—or impatiently—for feeding time

and their bucket of swill and armful of corn. Sometimes these hogs are thin; sometimes they are fat; but it is safe to say that almost everyone of them is "eating his head off" right there in plain sight of his owner.

It would be foolish, however, to blame the hogs for this. If they had some alfalfa or cow-peas or soy beans, or skim-milk to mix with the corn—or rather to mix the corn with—they would pay bigger prices for it than the farmer would



A PAIR OF BERKSHIRES THAT WEIGHED 820 POUNDS WHEN A YEAR OLD. They Were Not Raised in This Pen, but Largely on Pasture Crops and Skimmilk.

be likely to get anywhere else.

Three great reasons there are, then, why farm animals "eat their heads off:" (1) They are not kept at work; (2) they are of the wrong type, and (3) they are not properly fed. And the owner rather than the animal is at fault in all three cases.

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