

LIVESTOCK AND DAIRY

Livestock Suggestions for March

VI

Every spring, owing to a scarcity of high-priced feeds, most pastures have the stock turned on them before they have begun to make any growth worth while. Pasture plants can grow to best advantage only when they have several green leaves, through which growth is made possible. If as soon as the green leaves appear they are bitten off close to the ground and tramped into the earth they make little or no growth, even though they do not die out entirely. More is done to prevent pasture plants from doing well and more bare and waste spots occur in the pasture from too early and too close grazing than from any other cause, except smothering by weeds and brush. Nothing is gained by turning on the pastures so early, unless there is a much larger acreage than is necessary to support the stock later, which of itself is a waste. Better feed a little longer and give the pastures time to get a start for by so doing much more and better grazing will be secured.

II

More animals die before they are a week old than in any other period of three times the length. The trouble is usually due to errors in care and feeding, the result of filth or scours, an indication of indigestion and Nature's attempt to get rid of too much food is the most common cause of death. Few mothers give too little milk or are themselves underfed, but many of them give too much milk for their young because of being overfed the first few days after the birth of their young. Clean quarters, little feed the first 48 hours, and then only a slow and gradual increase of feed for the mother as the young increase in age and size will prevent most of the cases of scours in young animals. Prevention is best, but if that is not successful then the best treatment is starving.

III

Except for the mother the first few days after the birth of her young or for the young animal for the first few weeks of its life there is no need to caution the average Southern farmer against overfeeding his livestock. In fact, it is a disgrace that with the facilities we have for producing cheap feeds we so generally starve our livestock. At this season of the year, although we probably produced more feeds last year than ever before, there are thousands of animals in the South that are prevented from making anything for their owners simply because they are not being fed. Now is the time to plan for the production of more feeds. We didn't produce enough last year, we must not produce less in 1916.

IV

With hay and corn selling for present prices the man who fails to grow all he needs, and some more for safety, because he wants to plant more cotton, is surely a fit subject for the "fool-killer." Whatever may be the differences of opinion regarding the chances for a good price for cotton next fall, there is no question but the prospects of high prices for the feeds if they must be bought are much better than for cotton if it must be sold to buy feeds and pay debts when the other fellow calls for his money. We cannot afford to borrow money to grow feeds, nor to grow cotton to buy feeds.

V

It is not yet too late to start a permanent pasture. It is true most pasture plants do better if sowed in the fall, but better late than never. We do not advise sowing high-priced grass seeds on land that has not been prepared nor when brush, briars and weeds will smother out the slow growing pasture plants. But if the brush and briars are grubbed out and other obstructions to the use of the mower to keep down the weeds removed, it will pay to put out those seeds which are known to do well—lespedeza and white clover this spring, Bermuda grass seed as soon as the weather gets warm, or the sods at any time, and bur clover this fall are pretty safe almost everywhere. The bur clover may be too risky in the northern half of the Cotton Belt and the white clover may not be advisable on the sandy coastal plain; but at least, the pasture plants which do best in your section should be given a chance.

VII

This is the last call for pure-bred sires for the spring breeding. If the next crop of young things on the farm are to have a fair chance to make a profit for their owners, there is no time to lose in providing their pure-bred fathers. A spring calf by a pure-bred bull is worth \$20 to \$30 in the fall, while one from a scrub bull is hard to sell at half the price, and still most of the calves born have scrub sires. The pure-bred boar, ram or stallion pays as well, and yet little attention is given to their selection. Some think any sort of a sire is good enough to produce meat or common work animals, while others think that just so long as the sire is pure-bred that is enough; but there are many pure-bred animals in the South that have largely the characters of scrubs. One of the chief means of making "scrubs" out of pure-bred animals is by starving them. Our animals are already too good rustlers; they need owners that will rustle enough for them to produce the feed they require.

VIII

This is the season when most animals die from exposure and starvation. The last few weeks of winter prove the straw that breaks their backs. None would die from exposure if they were well fed, but many of the starved cattle which die at this season of the year might withstand the starvation if protected from exposure. A poor animal has little resistance, and cold spring rains carry off many of them. Even though an animal has not become sufficiently poor to die it will still pay to give them a little extra care at this season of the year. The weather is frequently bad, lice, and grubs in the back are doing their worst, and if scarcity of feed is also added to these troubles the animal thin in flesh and weakened by the hardships of winter may readily "give up the ghost."

IX

Begin dipping early and keep it up regularly until August and the ticks will all be gone. Taking two or three years to get rid of the ticks on a farm is entirely unnecessary and proves that the dipping of all the cattle has not been done regularly. The time has come when to harbor ticks on a farm is an inexcusable crime against society and the cattle and a disgrace to the owner of the farm. Many will not agree with this. It is not meant harshly, but simply as a plain statement of facts. For ten years and more we have known that it was easy to get rid of ticks, and for a much longer time the injury they do has been well proved, so why is it not fair, at this late date, to state that it is a disgrace and a crime to still continue to breed ticks?

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