

Lessons From 14-Years' Course in Dairying.

A Good Breed of Cows, Fed Well, and Treated Well Will Make Money for the Dairy and Double the Producing Capacity of the Farm.

I started dairying fourteen years ago with four registered Jersey cows and a bull. My farm of 150 acres,—about 100 acres in cultivation,—had been badly treated and was in a poor state of cultivation. Wishing to improve it, I tried raising horses, but the low price of 1893 forced a change to cattle.

Successful the First Year.

I knew nothing about the business, but was determined to learn. I subscribed for Hoard's Dairyman and it has been with me ever since. I was fortunate in buying my first cows; they all proved to be good ones. One of the four made 14½ pounds of butter in seven days, and the four made as much as 40 pounds a week for several weeks the first year.

I will say right here that the greatest mistake I have ever made was to sell a real good cow for what seemed to be a fancy price, when she was really cheap as a dairy cow. I was very much encouraged with my success, and so decided to increase my herd. My place is six miles from market, or shipping point, and I found it was too expensive to handle so small a quantity as it was no more cost to deliver a large quantity.

Bigger Herd, a Silo, and a Better Barn.

I bought several more cows and built a silo. The year following I bought a separator, and built a better barn, for a good convenient barn is absolutely necessary, where one expects to keep any number of cows.

The most important to be successful in dairying is to keep good cows. Of course, good care and feed is necessary, but without good cows one cannot hope for much profit. But one should be very careful that his cows have the right feed and attention before he condemns them for short production.

With good corn ensilage, peavine, clover or alfalfa hay for winter feed, and a Bermuda grass pasture for summer and, of course, also a liberal grain ration, a cow that will not make as much as 300 pounds of butter in a year had better be sold. In looking over the record of my herd for the last year I find that my poorest cow only made 212 pounds of butter, my best one made 563 pounds; and the cost of keep for each was practically the same. Probably the better cow consumed \$10 worth of grain more than the other. The one barely paid for feed and care, while the other made a handsome profit. I have fully decided that unless a cow makes as much as 300 pounds of butter in twelve months, some one else will have her to feed and milk.

I believe we have many advantages over the North and West for successful dairying, as we have a much larger pasture season. With Bermuda grass for pasture we have a continuous growth all summer, while the other cultivated grasses are not worth much through July and August.

Raise Your Own Dairy Cows.

The best way to get good cows is to raise them. If one has plenty of money he can buy them, but I am quite sure it is more satisfactory to raise them. In starting a herd the first thing to do is to select the breed you like the best. I think the Jerseys preferable to any other, while others think the Guernseys or Holsteins are the only dairy cows. Whatever breed you select, stick to it;

do not cross-breed. I believe it would be better to use a pure bred bull on scrub cows than to cross the Jersey and Holsteins. Too much importance cannot be attached to the selection of a bull. One should always remember that he is half the herd. You can hardly pay too much for a good sire, and he should have the best of care. I believe it is as important to give the bull good feed and care as the cows you breed him to. He ought not to be too fat, but in a nice, thrifty condition.

Liberal Feeding Pays.

I am sure it always pays to feed liberally. It is certainly poor economy, because grain is high not to keep young stock growing. It is a mistaken idea that a heifer should have no grain and should be kept thin in flesh, to make a good cow. They should not be fed so as to lay on a surplus amount of fat, but the same grain ration that would make a satisfactory milk flow is what young cattle should have. From my observation, I believe there is one hundred under-fed to one that is over-fed. A stunted calf may make a good cow, but she certainly would have made a much better cow if well fed from the start.

How the Calves Are Fed.

My calves are raised on skim milk, warm from the separator, after they are one month old. I usually let them suck their mothers for one day after they are dropped, and then feed them whole milk until they are between two and three weeks old, or until they begin to eat a little nice hay or grain, which they usually do by the time they are two weeks old. Wheat bran and oats mixed is good to start them on, and as soon as they begin to eat this add one-half shelled corn. I find that the whole corn is much better than corn meal. By the time they are four weeks old I have them wholly on skim milk until they are seven months old. What skim milk is not used for cows is fed to registered Berkshire hogs, of which I usually keep from fifty to seventy-five. I think it pays much better to feed grain with skim milk than to raise them altogether on milk or with but little grain.

It Pays to Test Your Milk.

Five years ago I began weighing each cow's milk separately and used the Babcock test every month. When I started this I wanted to raise the average of my herd to 365 pounds of butter, or a pound a day, for each cow. This I have done, and a little more, with the exception of one year. This year I have set my figures at 400 pounds. I am now milking 40 cows and out of the forty, 20 made over 400 pounds in 1906.

While I have bought more land since I started, I still need only the one hundred acres for my cattle, which number at present about ninety, young stock and all. Besides I am feeding fourteen horses and mules, and have sold some hay this year. While I have over doubled the producing capacity of my land and have, I think, been successful, as my cattle do not owe me anything. None of my neighbors have gone into the dairy business. They admire the fine crops that can be grown on a dairy farm, but when they think of the 365 days' work in a year it takes, they seem to think the work is too much for what one gets in return.

R. L. SHUFORD.

Catawba Co., N. C.

Deep-Breaking and Dust Mulch for Corn.

Messrs. Editors: Sixty or more years ago, when I was a boy about sixteen years old, my father sold corn for \$1.35 per bushel, in Orange Co., N.-Y. That year there was no rainfall for several months. Wells and streams dried up and farmers in some instances had to drive their cattle a long ways to water. The corn crop was a failure. Still Father made a fairly good crop. His motto was: Break up deep and break the earth well-stirred in dry weather.

This is a remark that I heard by two farmers passing: "Look at that crazy Englishman ploughing corn; he had better be lying in the shade. He is ruining his crop." I think the work he did was the cause of his success in that "off year."

While I did not farm for many years after; as I went to sea at seventeen years of age, yet I remembered that occurrence well and have adopted Father's motto: Keep the plough or cultivator going in a dry time and we will have less failure in our crops than from too much rain. Keep a dust mulch to hold the moisture.

B. B. DUMVILLE.

Suffolk, Va.

Don't Make Your Drag Too Heavy.

Messrs. Editors: I have tried several plans of drag and find the one illustrated in The Progressive Farmer to be far ahead of anything else of the kind. Caution should be used in not having the timber in the drag too heavy, the length according to number and strength of team. The hitch on chain and the driver's seat should be adjusted so the dirt will not bank up in front of it, otherwise a most valuable addition to the farm and road might be thrown aside and ever afterward regarded as a horse-killer.

H. H. WILLIAMSON.

Rockingham Co., N. C.

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