

LIVESTOCK AND DAIRY

Livestock Suggestions for July

AN EFFICIENT machine and cheap raw materials largely determine the economy of production. The South is making rapid strides in providing more efficient machines—better bred and better quality livestock. Much is yet to be desired in this respect, but we often wonder if we are not now going fast enough in this direction. In fact, the writer heard it stated recently that the cattle industry of a certain Southern state was developing too fast along the lines of more and better livestock. But no one has suggested that we are growing too much, too good, or too cheap raw materials—feeds. In short, not too many animals, nor too good ones, but too little and too expensive feeds, describes the present condition of the livestock industry in the South.

II

With the world demand for more food grains, the Southern livestock grower must learn to grow his livestock on roughage and the by-products from the preparation of human foods. Never again will human food grains be cheap enough so that the livestock feeder can use them with the lavish hand, the extravagance, which he has in the past. The problem of the Southern livestock producer, therefore, is to get the maximum results from pastures, silage and legume hays with a minimum of high-priced concentrates. But the die is already cast in so far as the growing of feeding stuffs for this year is concerned. However, next to production in importance, is conservation or the saving of feeding stuffs. Much can yet be done to make the supplies of feeds ample for the coming year, by saving all we grow.

III

The supplies of feeding stuffs may be very greatly increased by saving everything possible and providing as far as practicable late fall and winter grazing, by the early fall seeding of those crops best adapted to the soils and conditions of each section. Success in providing fall and winter grazing, except as affected by climatic and soil conditions, over which we have little control, depends almost entirely on planning and preparing early enough to permit putting the plans in operation at the proper time. For instance, late fall and winter grazing is rarely obtained except from early fall seeding. Early fall seeding is often impracticable unless plans have been carefully made and a real effort made to put them into effect.

IV

The most commonly expressed reason for the failure to provide winter grazing is that the dry weather prevented the preparation of the land or delayed the germination of the seeds planted. One or both of these conditions may prevent success in providing winter grazing, but it is rare that they cannot be overcome if proper plans are made and carried out. Land prepared early enough, so as to catch the usual rainfall, and cultivated occasionally to save this moisture, will seldom fail to produce a stand and sufficient early growth to afford considerable late fall and winter grazing. For instance, if one wants to be certain of rape for winter grazing two things must be done. The land must be prepared a month or six weeks before planting and harrowed occasionally, and it must be put on very rich land. If both these conditions cannot be secured, it simply means that those conditions necessary to success have not been produced, and a failure should not be charged to any other cause.

V

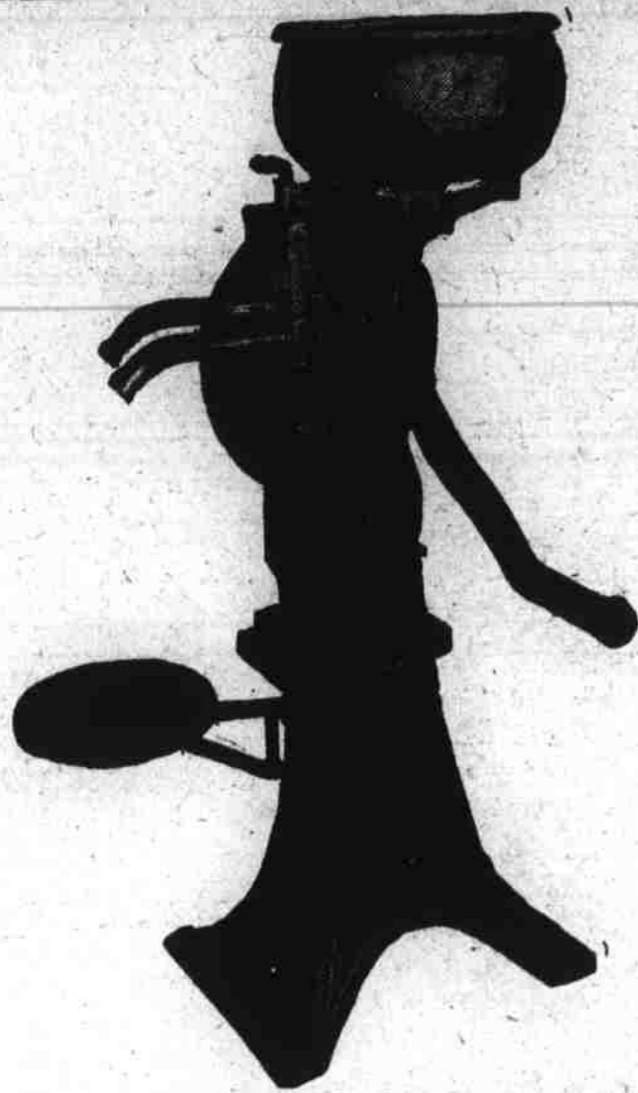
It is important that we begin planning at once for saving feeds by furnishing winter grazing. In fact, this planning for winter grazing should have been before the spring seeding took place, but it is equally important that we put into effect every practicable means of saving all the feed now growing. Nothing grown on the farm that may be saved for feed should be overlooked. Every silo needed should be built and filled from some growing crop, and anything else which can be saved for feed should be saved. Every corn stalk, all grass and every other plant not otherwise used that can be cured for dry roughage should be saved. Enough corn stalks are wasted every year to furnish an abundance of such dry roughage to our livestock, thousands of tons of hay might be made from grasses and other plants allowed to go to waste. If there ever was a time when every pound of dry roughage which it is possible to save should be saved it is this summer and fall of 1918. A shortage of labor will be given as the general excuse for the failure to do these things. Careful planning and a better use of the labor available will overcome this difficulty in most cases. We are only short of labor on Southern farms by comparison to what we once had.

VI

The corn crop offers the greatest opportunity for adding to our usual supplies of dry roughage. The stover is worth from one-half to three-fourths as much as the grain if properly saved. If worth even one-fourth as much as the grain it is still worth enough to justify saving it, and it is difficult to understand why it is not more generally saved in a country where dry roughage is always scarce and consequently always high-priced. The objections given by those who do not save the corn stover are varied, but among the number is the difficulty of curing it in a moist climate. These are the same men who cannot provide fall and winter grazing, because of the dry climate. Another objection is the labor and disagreeable work of cutting, shocking and hauling the stover. These are the same fellows who pull fodder. Another class object to it because they say the quality of the feed is poor, and these are the same fellows who buy cottonseed hulls. Still others contend that the same time and effort put into growing legumes will produce better and more feed value; but these are the fellows who are always short of feed of any sort long before the spring pastures will furnish grazing. In short, the only two possible reasons for not saving the corn stover are, first, that the feed cannot be used, and second, that dry roughage cannot be sold—two conditions which rarely or never prevail in the South.

VII

During the hot weather water and shade are as essential to the welfare of livestock as feed. It is bad to overstock the pastures so that the stock cannot get enough feed, and it is also bad to allow the weeds and briars and brush to choke out the grass so that sufficient feed cannot grow; but it is even worse, much worse, to allow the livestock to suffer for lack of an ample supply of good, clean water. Hot stables are not good for the horses and mules at night, the hogs must have shade, but all require an abundant supply of water. The work stock need water four or five times a day, cattle as often as they care for it and hogs at all times. If they fail to get it the owner pays the penalty. The open pool into which livestock go for drinking water is the easiest method of furnishing a water supply in some sections and with proper care it may furnish wholesome water; but it is also a source of much trouble and is not the source of water supply toward which we should strive.



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