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Livestock and Dairy Problems

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Selecting the Dairy Breed

A READER has two half-blood Holstein heifers. He wants to buy a bull and wants to know whether he should buy a Guernsey or a Holstein, and whether he should breed these two grade Holstein heifers to a Guernsey or a Holstein bull.

Of course, the fact that our reader has two half-blood or grade Holstein heifers should probably not decide which breed of dairy cows he should adopt, if he expects to build up a fair-sized dairy herd, but there is no question as to the breed of the bull to which he should breed these two grade Holstein heifers. They should be bred to a purebred Holstein bull, if one is available. If we in the South, that is the average man on the farm, could get away from that common and popular error that it is desirable to cross the different breeds we would have made a decided advance in livestock education. It is not desirable to cross two breeds so distinctly different as Guernsey and Holstein. The popular idea is that by so doing one can secure in the progeny the large milk flow of the Holstein and the rich, yellow milk of the Guernsey. One or the other quality may be obtained, but rarely both. In fact, the more common result is that neither quality is secured. These qualities were the latest acquired, probably, and are the quickest lost when cross breeding is practiced.

Select either Holsteins or Guernseys, but do not cross or mix them. If most of the cows to which the bull is to be bred, that it is expected to buy, are grade Holsteins, then buy a Holstein bull, and if the cows are mostly Guernsey grades buy a Guernsey bull, or if mostly Jersey then buy a Jersey bull.

When feed is plentiful and milk is to be produced to be sold as whole milk these conditions favor the selection of Holsteins, while if rich milk for family use, or for butter making, or for the sale of cream is desired and a smaller cow requiring less feed fits conditions better, the selection of Guernseys is favored. Both are good dairy cattle and either will do well if well handled. Which breed to select is not nearly so important as to get a good grade or quality of the breed selected.

The Feeding Value of Buttermilk

A READER asks: "What can I afford to pay for buttermilk for feeding hogs, wheat bran and shorts being $1.80 a 100 pounds ($36 a ton)? What should be fed with the buttermilk? I raise barley and oats, also barley, wheat, and rye as mixed grain. I think barley the best feed grain a poor man can grow."

Buttermilk and skimmilk have about the same feeding value, although buttermilk usually contains more fat. Buttermilk is not so good for feeding calves, requiring more care in feeding, but for pigs, if not diluted, it is an excellent feed, and about equal to skimmed milk.

Milk Is Good Supplement to Corn

MILK is the best supplement to corn or other grains for feeding pigs. Tankage, fish meal, etc., are good, but not quite equal to milk. The question, therefore, may be considered from the standpoint of cost, with the assurance that there is no better source of protein with which to feed corn, barley, and other such grains. When buttermilk or skimmed milk is used, the gains are usually better and it requires less care and skill than with any other known feed to get good growth on pigs.

Breeders of purebred pigs to be sold for breeding purposes can afford to pay more for buttermilk or skimmed milk than for feeding market hogs because, with milk, better growth and better condition can be obtained than with other feeds.

Taking the results of a large number of experiments, 475 to 600 pounds of buttermilk or skimmed milk has shown a feeding value equal to 100 pounds of corn or other similar grain.

The milk will have its greatest feeding value when about three pounds of milk is fed to one pound of grain.

Estimating the Value of Buttermilk

THE late Governor Hoard's rule for finding the value of skimmed milk or buttermilk is: "To find the value of 100 pounds of skimmed milk when fed alone, multiply the market price of live hogs in cents per pound by 5; if fed in combination with corn or barley, multiply by 6." By this rule, when hogs sell for 10 cents a pound, buttermilk is worth 50 cents a 100 pounds when fed alone, and 60 cents when fed with corn or barley.

Another rule for estimating the value of buttermilk is that 100 pounds of milk is worth one-half the price of a bushel of corn, when both are fed together. These indicate the value of buttermilk for feeding market hogs, but, as stated, the feeder of purebred hogs can afford to give the milk a slightly higher value in comparison with corn or barley. Corn or barley should be fed with the buttermilk, whichever is the cheaper per pound.

Wheat bran is not a very good protein supplement for pigs. It is too coarse or bulky.

Wheat shorts are excellent for pigs, but generally are too high-priced for profitable Southern feeding.

In a test, 297 pounds of corn and 445 pounds of skimmed milk made 100 pounds of gain, while it required 181 pounds of corn and 180 pounds of wheat shorts to make 100 pounds of gain. If we allow $36 a ton for shorts, the price quoted, and 60 cents a bushel for corn, then 100 pounds of milk in this case was worth 45 cents for feeding pork hogs, compared on a basis of feeding corn and milk against feeding corn and wheat shorts.

Feed New Hay Carefully

THE feeding of new hay to horses and mules in hot weather is the cause of much trouble. There may be others, but it appears that the main reasons are that the hay contains more moisture and causes greater looseness of the bowels, and that being fresh and more palatable, the animals eat much more of it.

Animals off pasture or full of new hay suffer more from the heat and are more subject to scours, colic, founder, etc.

With farm work stock, heat stroke and colic are the troubles generally resulting from the feeding of new hay. New legume hays seem to cause more trouble than new grass hays. But no animal, which is doing hard work in hot weather, should be fed new hay of any sort unless the quantity is greatly reduced. This is particularly true of driving and riding animals.

If new hay must be fed, which is often the case, then the quantity given should be small and none should be given at the morning or noon feeds. In no case should the amount exceed three-quarters of a pound a day for every 100 pounds of the animal's weight and this, as stated, should be given at the night feed.

The importance of limiting the quantity of new hay fed to work stock in hot weather cannot be exaggerated. The animals will do more work and keep in better condition if the amount given be small.

Feeding Pigs on Pasture

"WHEN wheat shorts cost $1.80 a hundred pounds, corn sells for 75 cents a bushel and tankage $3 a hundred, which would be most economical for feeding pigs on pasture; corn and tankage, or corn, shorts, and tankage?"

In experiments recorded by Henry it took 436.5 pounds of corn and 48.5 pounds of tankage to make 100 pounds of gain, and 303 pounds corn, 125 pounds wheat shorts and 32 pounds of tankage to make 100 pounds of gain. At the prices for feeds quoted in our inquiry, the cost of 100 pounds of gain was practically the same in both cases, being $7.30 for the corn and tankage ration and $7.27 for the corn, wheat shorts, and tankage ration.

In these experiments, however, the pigs were not on pasture and the better gains made by the pigs getting wheat shorts, in addition to corn and tankage, were probably due to the greater variety of proteins. The pigs on corn and tankage made good gains, 1.44 pounds daily but those on corn, shorts and tankage gained 1.60 pounds daily.

We doubt if there would be such a difference in the gains when the pigs were on pasture, especially if the pasture was some legume.

We are, therefore, of the opinion, based on these experiments and our own experience and observation, that it will not pay to buy wheat shorts at $1.80 a hundred pounds for pigs on pasture, to add to corn at 75 cents a bushel, and tankage at $3 a hundred pounds. We would feed the corn on hand and buy merely tankage to supplement it.

Brood Sows Should Be Strong and Vigorous When Bred

"WILL brood sows bred when in strong condition and good flesh, bring larger litters than when bred immediately after weaning a litter that has suckled them down thin?"

If the sow has been suckled down so thin that she is weak and not in vigorous, good health when bred, she will probably produce less pigs than if in fair flesh and strong, vigorous condition.

We doubt if merely being thin in flesh will lessen the number of pigs. Some also think if sows are bred when fat the litters will be smaller. It is probably true that if excessively poor or fat when bred the litter is likely to be smaller, but merely being thin or carrying considerable flesh is not likely to have much influence on the size of the litter. If the sow is strong and vigorous, has had plenty of exercise and is properly fed, the fact that she is thin in flesh is not likely to have much effect on the size of her next litter.

It is very rare that young sows are too fat when bred in the South. It is also rare that old sows that breed regularly are too fat in the South. There are 10 sows kept too poor for the best breeding results for every one that is too fat.

If the sow gets green feed, mineral matter and exercise she will not be harmed by carrying some flesh. The sow that is so poor that she is weak is more common and the one whose litter is likely to be reduced in size, because of her condition. The good brood sow that is bred as soon after weaning a litter as possible is certain to be rather thin in flesh. If she is a good brood sow she must be a good milk producer, and if she produces a large quantity of milk she is certain to be rather thin; but if she has had the right sort of feed and care, has had exercise, green feed, mineral matter, and a good allowance of grain she will not be weak, although she may be thin. Such a sow may be bred as soon as possible after weaning a litter with satisfactory results. But beyond question, the sow that is so thin or poor that she is weak, ought to be fed up into vigorous condition before breeding.

Pot-bellied Pigs

A READER has 16 purebred pigs, nine weeks old, that are grazing on rye and rape and fed corn and blood meal. They are "pot-bellied" and he wants to know the cause and if they will get over it.

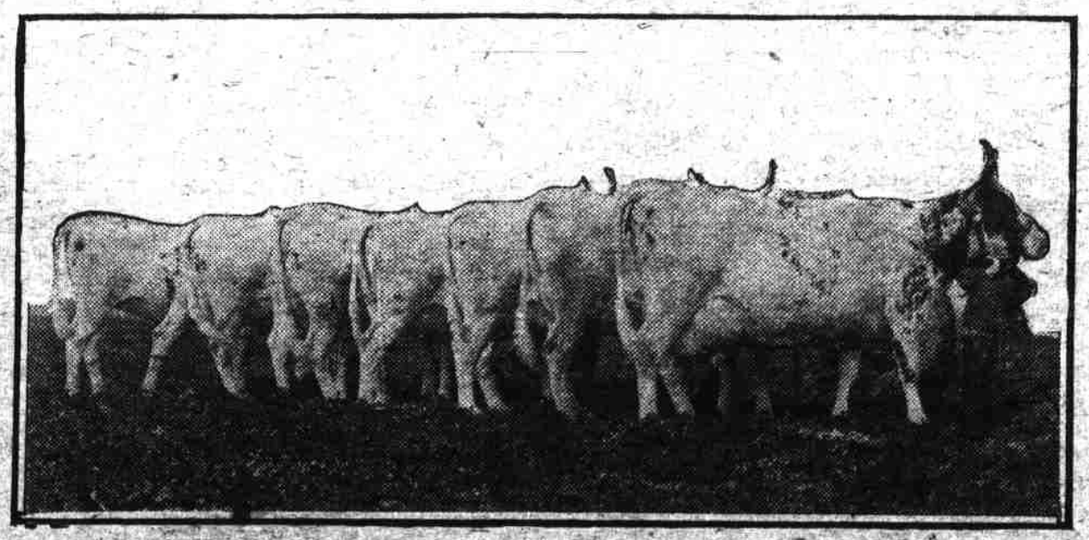
Pigs of that age seldom get "pot-bellied," except when given large quantities of skimmed milk or buttermilk. These pigs must be grazing the rye and rape pretty heavily for we can see no other cause for their getting "pot-bellied." It may be that they are especially good feeders and have a natural tendency to large bellies, but if fed on corn and blood meal alone, they would probably lose their large bellies. If the pigs are doing well there need be no worry about their large bellies, they will probably outgrow this defect.

Cattle and Sheep May Be Kept on Same Pasture

A READER writes: "I have heard that when cows and sheep run together in a pasture it will make the cows have a cough, what about it?"

No harm will result to either cows or sheep through running in the same pasture.

If there is not ample grazing for all, the cows will suffer most, because the sheep bite closer. Cows should not follow sheep, but sheep may follow cows on a pasture; or as stated, when there is plenty of grass for both, they may run together. Possibly separate pastures are better, but no harm will be done to either by running in the same pasture if both get enough feed.



AN AYRSHIRE COW AND SIX OF HER DAUGHTERS

This is Tootsie Mitchell (on the right) of Pinehurst Farm, and a part of her family. She is a fine representative of the Ayrshire breed which is characterized by a rugged constitution, hardiness, and good grazing qualities.