

Opportunities Unlimited Needs - Desire

By W. S. "Bill" Austin, Executive Secretary North Carolina Cattlemen's Association. We have been hearing and receiving a great deal of information on the potential of the livestock

industry, particularly cattle and hog production in North Carolina. In 1961 beef cattle numbers increased approximately 12,000 head, but when you think of population increase this number will

not feed the additional people which were born in 1961. So with our present growth as it now stands and percentage increases during the next few years cattle will have to jump from 12,000 to approximately 200,000 if we are to remain status quo.

Cattle production today offers the state cattle producers an immediate opportunity to pick up approximately 20 million dollars and this could be increased to approximately 100 million dollars in the very near future. Local packers and processors are now spending better than 20 million dollars a year in purchasing a supply of livestock to maintain their processing plants. The 100 million dollar potential for livestock producers if North Carolina would expand its beef cattle production to equal that of the beef which is now consumed in the State. I believe that we have moved forward in this direction. This past year a greater proportion of the feeders calves and yearlings sold in North Carolina remained in the State more than any other other previous year.

One of the things you have heard me and others speak of from time to time is the necessity for increasing your pasture production here in North Carolina in order to build up our cattle numbers and potential. The more I travel and observe, the more I convince I become that grass is the great foundation of a successful cattle operation. Certainly it must be considered a miraculous crop. When consumed by a beef animal it forms lucid red meat - when consumed by a dairy animal, it dissolves into rich golden milk. It is a complete feed in itself requiring no supplement when available in plentiful quantities. Cattle have a tendency to strive better on grass than on a full feed of concentrates. It is the only crop I know of that is planted only one time and gets better and better as the years go by with proper management.

Thus it is a sad fact to note that as I travel through the different areas of the State I find so few real good improved pastures. How about you making the same observation yourself as you travel through your area. For instance, see how much of our land is unfenced, covered with broom sage, bushes, etc. Observe how few acres are in a well adapted grass that looks like it has been well fertilized, properly clipped and grazed at proper stocking rates. Then too, notice how much land is planted in row crops for which it is completely unsuited, but with which could be changed to lush pasture with proper treatment.

It is amazing to me to see so much improperly utilized in the State of North Carolina. Certainly this must be considered one of the drawbacks to a full realization of our natural resources. I don't know which comes first, the chicken or the egg, but I am certain that a cattle operation that does not first involve nutritious grass is doomed to failure regardless of how good the cattle are at stocking. Cattle of poor quality

can be made to look rather decent when put on good lucid pasture while quality cattle, no matter how good, will not remain quality cattle long when underfed on an understocked pasture. Invariably when you see good pasture on a man's farm, you can look for cattle which are above average quality, whether they be commercial or purebred.

It is to be that we could turn a herd of nondescript "yellow farmers" out in the pasture of pine thickets, bushes, briars and find them up each fall for market, but as the hunter says "that old dog won't hunt anymore." With increasing land values and higher land taxes plus growing overhead, it makes the old extensive method of farming and cattle raising obsolete and expensive. Regardless of how many acres are involved on our farms, the present demands intensive practices of grass management to be applied. We should try to have not every acre but every square foot of our pasture producing its maximum. We should not be satisfied until a thick sod completely hides the land underneath.

You as farmers will throw fertilizer to row crops and kill every weed, but how many of you will show your pasture the same general respect in order to have a successful cattle operation. The livestock destiny of North Carolina lies in this miracle crop called grass in which we should strive to have as a profitable enterprise. But being on a more practical plain, it makes us wonder how many more brood cows, stocker cattle and feeders would stock our lands and how many more dollars would pass through the hands of North Carolina farmers if every suitable acre was planted in grass and every acre of that grass properly managed. Surely it is something to work for.

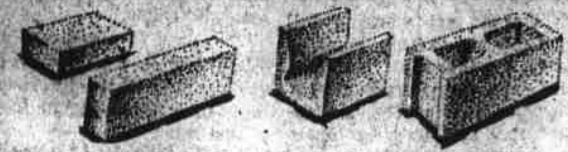
After the establishment of pastures, then comes the cattle. Today in North Carolina we are offered the greatest potential ever known in our livestock industry. In my opinion we have some of the best markets that are available anywhere in the United States. Last year cattle prices were running somewhat higher in North Carolina than on some of the larger terminal markets of other areas.

Lorenz Neuf, Vice President and General Manager of Frosty Morn Meats, Kinston, N. C., recently presented some figures which were alarming to me and I also believe that you will agree after hearing this report. He stated the livestock production had increased tremendously in North Carolina over the past 10 years, but we are now producing a lower percentage of our total consumption than we were 10 years ago. The consumption of beef in North Carolina from commercial sources is approximately 236.6 million pounds of which only 63.3 million pounds of beef is processed by North Carolina packers which indicates that North Carolina is producing a deficit of 168 million pounds of beef annually. He further stated in order to bring area processing plants up to 100% capacity, meat production would add an income of approximately \$19,507,000.00 in cattle. In increased production to meet the total State meat consumption would add \$107,692,000.00 for cattle. From the above figures and the potential which we have here in North Carolina, we the cattle producers, can increase our production and maintain our market. Instead of bragging about the

advancements which we have made over the last few years, I believe it is time that all of us coordinate our efforts in reaching our goals - so that we can be much more successful in the future.

You producers should be gratified to have a man like N. C. State College available to supply us with up-to-date information as to the possibility of expanding our livestock production. North Carolina is very fortunate in having Extension Livestock Specialists which are available and willing to help you in any way possible. The North Carolina Department of Agriculture is another agency which we are all proud and is doing everything possible to help the producer. I don't know of another department in any other State which can compare with ours. Our thanks goes to Commissioner Ballentine and his staff for doing such an outstanding job.

Your North Carolina Cattlemen's Association which operates through the collected 10c per head assessment on all cattle sold for slaughter are doing everything in their power to promote the promotion, marketing and consumption of North Carolina



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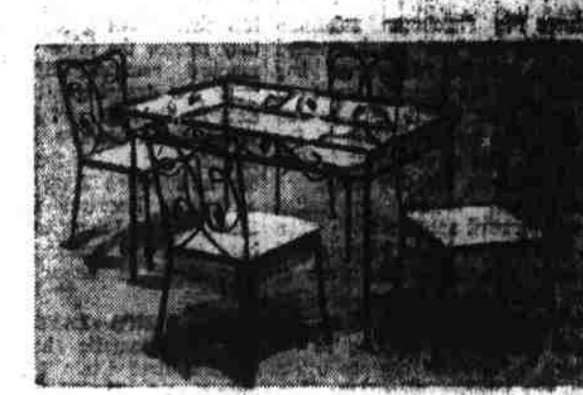
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