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Farm Dairying



Jersey Heifer

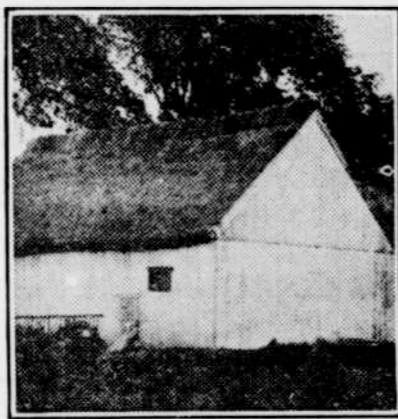
III.—Advice to Buyers of Cows.

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WHEN buying a cow it is not always possible to find out the actual yield and quality of her milk. In such a case we must look for outward indications that are likely to bespeak good milking ability.

Some people lay little stress on form and place all the emphasis on the perform. While we agree with them, yet at the same time we believe the form of the typical dairy cow to be a result of the performance at the milk pail through many past generations. One has followed the other as surely as the fruit follows the blossom.

Development of the Cow.
 By selection, breeding and management the cow with naturally a small paunch, diminutive udder and ability



A BARN WITHOUT LIGHT AND AIR IS A BREEDING PLACE FOR TUBERCULOSIS.

to give milk for only a short time to nourish her young has been developed into an animal with big girth, enormous udder and ability to give a good flow of milk almost continuously. Such is the achievement of man in the animal kingdom. What then must we look for in a profitable dairy cow—points common to all breeds?

Beginning at the nose, we like the nostrils to be large to admit plenty of air to the lungs, so as to keep the blood pure and the cow healthy. The mouth should be large and the lips firm, but elastic. A large mouth is said to indicate a large appetite. Whether this is limited to cowkind and does not extend to mankind I know not, but I do know we seek cows with good, keen appetites, for if they do their duty the more food the more milk.

From the muzzle up to the eyes should be clean cut and not too heavy. The eyes should be large and bright. They indicate the nervous constitution of the animal, and a cow to be a good milker should have strong nerves.

"She Knew Her Business."

The forehead—the space between the eyes—should be wide and dished. The dished effect results from the full eye, and we want the breadth, for there is where the brains are situated. Cows show intelligence in their faces much the same as human beings do. I have fancied as I looked at a fine cow that she knew what her business was and did not neglect it. Mark you, when a cow is keeping her jaws going she is working—yes, just as much and just as effectively as a set of stones in a grist mill or a weaver at a loom. She, too, is taking raw material and manufacturing it into a finished product. But, to return to her head. The horns should be symmetrical and not too large. The ears not very large, and when they are turned back there should be seen a yellow oily secretion on the inside. This should also be found on the udder and on the tip of the tail. I have heard that it indicates richness of milk, but more likely it denotes constitutional vigor and thrift. For the same reason we like the hair to be soft and oily or silky, and when we pull the skin up from the ribs it should be elastic and spring back and not be thick and leathery.

The neck should be slender and neatly joined to the shoulders. There should be no excessive amount of loose, flabby skin on the under part of the throat and neck.

The Double Wedge.
 We (and I might here explain that "we" means myself and all who agree with me) like to see the double wedge in the dairy form. From the head she should gradually increase in width toward the hind quarters. Then from the shoulders down we like to see her broaden out.

There should be good width between the forelegs, and the space behind the

elbow should be well filled out. Just in this part are situated the vital organs—the heart and lungs. A cow narrow between the forelegs is exactly the same as a narrow chested person—both are apt to be subjects for tuberculosis.

The backbone should be large, loosely pointed and a little prominent, another indication of nerve power, for in the backbone runs the spinal cord, the chief nerve of the body.

The barrel or body of the cow should have good length and depth. This is her storehouse and should be capable of holding large quantities of food.

The cow should be wide and strong across the loins to support this large paunch, for weakness in this point often causes a sag in the back. The thighs should be thin and hollowed out to give plenty of space between the legs, and the tanks should be high, allowing room for a large udder.

Horsemen say, "No foot, no horse." Dairymen say, "No udder, no cow." The udder should extend well up at the back and well forward, being strongly attached to the body. The sole of the udder in a cow, especially a young cow, should be level and the teats evenly placed and conveniently long to be milked. The udder should be covered with fine soft hair, and they will be some indication of the size and length of the milk veins.

Milk Veins and Milk Wells.
 The milk veins coming from the udder and running forward under the body should be large, tortuous and extending well toward the front before entering the body through what are called the milk wells. Sometimes these openings in the abdominal wall are small and press the veins, swelling them and making them appear larger than they really are. In buying a cow not milking it is well to feel the size of the milk wells, and they will be some indication of the size and length of the milk veins.

After the cow is milked out the udder should hang like a bag of skin, soft and pliable. Occasionally we see a cow with a beautiful udder. After being milked she still has her beautiful udder, but has added little to the milk pail. This is known as a fleshy udder and often deceives a buyer.

The escutcheon, or milk mirror, is considered by some dairymen as an important indication of a cow's value as a milker. The escutcheon is that portion of the hind quarters at the back and top of the udder where the hair points upward instead of downward. It is taken as a good sign when the space covered with such hair is large and when there are several "cores" or "whirlpools" where the hair gathers toward a center.

Some judges like the terminal tail bone to reach the hock. The tail is but a continuation of the backbone—the larger and more loosely jointed the vertebrae the longer the tail. It should taper toward the point and end in a nice, full switch.

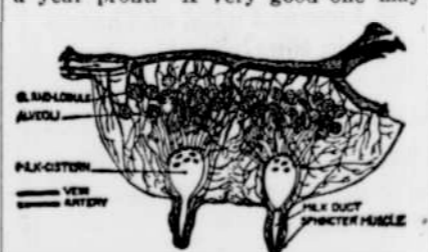
First Look For Constitution.

Summing up the qualities of a good cow, we should say first look for constitution. It is anything but pleasant to think of using milk which has come from a sickly, diseased animal. Don't you think with me there is a strong relationship between the vitality of the cow and the vitality of the milk she gives? First, then, let us emphasize the necessity of having a healthy cow as indicated by a readiness for her food, a full, bright eye, soft, pliable hair and skin; steady, even breathing and good heart and lung capacity. Then we want good milking qualities, as suggested by a strong nervous system, large middle piece and splendid udder. She should have a quiet, contented disposition, submit quietly to being handled and should be an easy milker.

A cow should increase in her milk flow during the first few lactation periods, and frequently there is a slight increase in the percentage of fat as she reaches maturity.

She may be said to be at her best from her fifth to her eighth year, and many do splendid work for many years after that age.

A cow should make from \$30 to \$60 a year profit. A very good one may



CROSS SECTION OF COW'S UDDER, SHOWING THE CELLS IN WHICH MILK IS SECRETED.
 make for her owner \$75 to \$100. The profit may be estimated if the food cost be subtracted from the value of the milk fat. The value of the skim milk, calf and manure offsets the cost of labor in connection with the care of the cow.

Pets of the Herd, But—

Receiving good care, a cow should give 6,000 pounds of milk, testing at least 3.8 per cent fat, or should make 250 pounds of butter in a year. A heifer should reach this amount in her second lactation period. This is not a high standard, but if put into force throughout the country it would mean that three-quarters of the cows would be doomed. The average yearly yield per cow is not over 4,000 pounds of milk. With such an average, how many very poor ones there must be! What about yours? In nearly every stable there are sleek, gentle cows, which stretch their necks as greedily as can be for mangels and meal and which walk forth with a leisurely important air to pastures green and luxuriant, the pets often of the herd, and yet if X rays of the scales and the test for fat were thrown on such cows the revelation would assign them to the butcher's block.

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