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EDITORIAL
Opinions of the
Observer

How He Coaxed His Cows Into Six World's Records

BY A. C. HEYMAN
An Oregon County Agent

Ovid Pickard, a plain and modest farmer of Marion, Oregon, is world-famous as the breeder of Viva La France and of Darling's Jolly Lassie, two of the greatest of all cows. His cows have broken six world's records, and have held four at one time. Forty years after poverty had driven the family out of their old home, the Pickard Bros., Ovid and Elzy, went in debt for \$21,000 to get it back. They raised Viva La France, the great long-distance record cow. At the end of the third of the six years during which she produced 78,461 pounds of milk and 5,331 pounds of butterfat, they were offered \$30,000 for her. Darling's Jolly Lassie is world's champion junior four-year-old over all breeds.

"I can't remember when I couldn't milk and didn't like cows," Pickard says. "When I was thirteen and we lived in Eugene, I made up my mind to go back to our old farm, where Mr. Norton, the new owner, had some Jerseys. With 50 cents in my pocket I started to walk the 56 miles. I spent a quarter for food the first day, and spent the night in a roadside straw stack. With a nickel left, I arrived at Norton's the next day. He gave me a job and I worked for him eight years.

"My enthusiasm for Jerseys grew as I worked on. Instead of celebrating on Sundays and holidays with the other boys, I visited the breeders of purebred Jerseys, of whom there were then a few in this Willamette valley. I looked at every cow. I remember having seen in one herd some cows that produced two pounds of butter a day. I thought this was wonderful, and told the owner that I should be extremely happy if I could some day own a bunch of cows as good as those. These trips gave me much more pleasure than I could have got from any picnic.

"I made a careful study of confirmation and type of the highest producing animals, so that when I should go into the business for myself I would be able to select the best as a foundation, and then, by judicious mating, improve the herd as best I could, my chief object being lots of butterfat."

From this effort of producing the best cows I could, from the foundation which I had, came Viva La France; but there was no conscious effort to produce any world champions. Of course, when I knew how well I had done I determined to climb to the very top if possible. I now have broken six world records with my breeding, and have held as high as four world records at one time.

"With my small savings I started in the dairy business in the alfalfa region of southern Oregon in 1901, with a bunch of grades and a few purebreds. But I did not like the bloating and loss of cows on the alfalfa, so I sold out completely and came to a nearby farm and went in partnership with E. J. Farnham on his ranch. We secured some purebreds, and later in 1911, when my brother and I decided to buy the old homestead, we also bought all of the partnership cattle but one. Since then my brother has given all his attention to the farm and the growing of crops, while I became manager, herdsman, breeder, milker, and full caretaker of our herd, and have continued in this capacity ever since.

"We still owed nearly \$21,000 on the farm when I was offered \$30,000 for Viva La France. I told my banker I intended to sell the cow. He asked me if I intended to go out of the business. I said: 'Goodness, no! I have just fairly started.'

"Then he asked, 'Why sell your best cow, then? If she is worth \$30,000 to someone else, she is worth that to you.'

"But," I said, 'see all this money we owe you; we want to pay our debts while we can.'

"All right," he replied, 'but have I asked you for it, or have I been crowding you? My advice is to keep the cow and for the present forget the debt.'

"This suited me, for I loved that cow. I had bred her, bred and owned her dam, and believed that in proper hands she would make a great cow. Her death from milk fever was a great loss, but we made more than \$30,000 by keeping her.

I sold her first calf, a male, before she was tested, for \$400. After it was known how good she was, I sold her second son for \$8,000, her third son for \$7,000, and a fourth son for \$5,000; and I now have one son and one daughter left, the other daughter having died only a few months ago, with milk fever, just as she was ready to make at least a 1,000-pound fat record. The other daughter has

just had her first calf, and is now on test.

Darling's Jolly Lassie's record of 16,425 pounds of milk and 1,141.28 pounds fat makes her the champion for all Jerseys for all ages. That record is due to my beginning with her great-grand-dam, Shine Donaldson Hart, which I raised. She was a wonderful cow, but had no official record because this was before cow testing days. From this old cow came Old Man's Darling, who made 817 pounds fat. She was bought by the Oregon Agricultural College. Her daughter, Old Man's Darling, 2d, made a record of 983 pounds fat as a junior-four-year-old, becoming the champion in this class, and having held this honor for five years, or until she was defeated by her own

daughter, Darling's Jolly Lassie, with a record of 1,141.28 pounds butter fat.

"This gradual increase in these four generations in my opinion, is due to three things: judicious breeding, right feeding and human kindness.

The Pickard brothers' farm buildings are unpretentious. The barn is old, with no modern conveniences nor fancy box stalls. Cracks in the outside stall of the wall where I saw Lassie standing were big enough to throw a bucket through. Yet she was contented, even attempting to lick her master when he came near. When we came to Viva La France's last son, a baby calf only a few weeks old, Ovid fondled as though it were an orphan child.

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1923, the undersigned were duly
appointed executors of the last
Will and Testament of Charles
Kreft, deceased, and that thereafter
the said undersigned duly quali-
fied as such executors. All persons
having claims against said estate
must present same duly verified as
required by law to said executors
at the office of their attorney, Elmo
S. White, 402 Masonic Temple,
Salem, Oregon, within six months
from the publication of this notice.
Dated the 8th day of Novem-
ber, 1923.

Carl Kreft,
Albert Kreft,
Executors of the estate of Charles
Kreft, deceased.

Elmo S. White, 402 Masonic Tem-
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