

Better Cows and Larger Profits

BY H. E. ERDMANNE.

WTHIN the past few years a great deal has been said and written about the decreased profits in the dairy business. Nor is it surprising that such a cry should go up. In almost every section feed is much higher than it was in the "good old days" gone by. Help has gone up and is still going. Land is becoming scarce. There is little new land to be occupied in this country, hence the rising price. In some sections of the Middle West land prices have gone to what seems like the upper limit. Prices of beef have been so high that the amount of money invested in a herd of ordinary cows is 50 to 100 per cent higher than it was 20 years ago.

Because of these conditions many have gone out of dairying, preferring to sell their crops rather than to have expensive and often incompetent help feed them to high-priced cows.

Need of Better Cows.

In other lines of manufacture there have been similar decreases in the profits. In many instances—for example the manufacture of shoes—the cost of raw material and labor has gone up faster than the price of the finished product. To meet the situation, shoe manufacturers installed machines that enabled their men to make better shoes in less time than formerly. The result was that while there is less profit on each shoe now, each man can do enough more work to bring the profits up to or beyond what they were. The same thing was done in many other lines of production, and must be done in the dairy industry if the greatest profits are to be realized.

What the dairy industry needs, more than anything else, to increase the profits, is better cows. I do not mean pure breeds, necessarily, nor expensive cows, but ordinary good cows, such as every dairyman can raise. There is scarcely a herd that does not contain some cows that are money-losers instead of money-makers. This is shown in almost every herd test that has ever been conducted.

Getting Good Average.

At the National Dairy Show at Chicago last year there was a demonstration herd consisting of nine cows, mixed breeds and grades. No effort was made to select unusually good cows, the aim being to get as nearly as possible an average herd. In this herd the best cow returned \$2.77 worth of butter-fat for each \$1 worth of feed she consumed, while the poorest cow returned but 60c for each \$1 worth of feed consumed.

Similar results are reported from every part of the country. In bulletin 322 of the New York Experiment Station, an instance is cited in which a cheese factory in one year paid one patron \$877 for the milk from eight cows, while it paid another man \$9 less, \$868, for the milk from 22 cows.

The most interesting thing about this whole problem of poor cows is the simple method by which production may be increased. I refer to the use of a good sire. No dairyman should ever use a sire whose nearest dams were not good producers, and at this time—over 20 years after the discovery and introduction of the Babcock test—no dairyman should ever buy a bull calf unless the seller can show in black and white what kind of producers the dam and two nearest grandams were.

Worth of Good Sires.

The question is often asked, "what is a good sire worth?" Let us figure a little. Suppose a man has 10 cows, producing on an average 200 pounds of butter-fat per year. From these 10 cows he should raise at least four heifer calves each year, or eight heifer calves during the two years a dairy bull is usually kept. When a good sire is mated to such cows the resulting heifers will often produce 75 to 150 pounds more butter-fat each year than did their dams.

But suppose each of these eight heifers produce only 30 pounds more than their dams. Then during six years the average milking life of a cow, each heifer would produce 180 pounds more butter-fat than would have been produced had the sire been no better than the dam. One hundred and eighty pounds of fat at 25c is worth \$45. Multiply this by eight and you have \$360, or the amount that the extra quality of the sire has added to the value of the product of his eight heifers. The man who is in the business to make money—and who is in it for any other reason?—cannot ignore this phase of the business.

Usually when a man finds out that

his cows are not what he wants, he is in such a hurry to sell them and buy good ones that he will sell them for what he can get and pay almost any price for what he wants to buy. That is a mistake. Unless his cows are actually robbers, he had better keep them and mate them to good sires.

Then by raising the heifers from the best cows, testing and weighing the milk from all the cows often enough to know what each one is doing, he can gradually build up his herd. This takes time, but it is surprising what 10 years—or even five—of this kind of breeding will do.

Of course there are often opportunities to buy a few good cows, but it is usually the poor cows that are offered for sale. Remember, a dairyman seldom offers to sell a good, tested cow. Unless he is going out of business he will sell only his poorer cows. It behooves every dairyman to get the use of a good sire, and then raise the good heifers—those from the best cows.

Money-Makers Are Soon Shown by Testing Cows

COW testing shows the money-makers. The best cows in many Wisconsin herds are returning a profit of \$100 or more every year. It is possible to have every cow kept do as well.

The loafers—the cows that consume more than they return—are quickly spotted and eliminated when the cow test is used. No successful merchant handles a line of goods on which he loses money; likewise, no progressive dairyman will milk a cow on which he does not make a profit. The milking of cows is a straight business proposition, and no farmer can afford to spend his own time or pay high priced labor to milk cows which do not pay for their board. Let's make the \$100 return per cow our standard.

To build up a profitable herd the cow test is indispensable. It enables the dairyman to quickly get a high producing herd by selecting heifers from only the best cows. In this connection the sires that are capable of transmitting dairy quality and temperament to their offspring can be proven. The very general practice of sending mature bulls to the block, when they are just in their prime for breeding purposes, is detrimental to our dairy industry and should be stopped.

Cow testing also pays because surplus stock of both sexes sells for higher prices when buyers can see what the ancestors of these animals have done in the line of milk and butter fat production. When using the test, farmers may know their cows as individuals and feed so as to get the greatest return for every dollar's worth of feed provided. The value of the silo in supplying fresh Summer succulence during the Winter months, and in helping out when pastures dry up in Summer, is also shown best when cows are under test.—G. R. Ingalls, Wisconsin.

Co-operation in Buying and in Testing the Cow

SOME of the leading farmers of Gallia County, Ohio, are awakening to the possibilities of organized effort and co-operation. This has led them to form two co-operative organizations, the Gallia County Cow Testing Association and the Gallia County Buying Association. The same officers control both organizations and one man can belong to both or only one.

Each of the 25 men who are now in the Cow Testing Association pays \$15 toward the expense of keeping a tester and if more than 10 cows are being tested by a member, the cost is \$1.50 per cow. Since there are 26 working days in the month, the tester is busy every day. One man found that one of his cows gave 1163

pounds of butterfat, which was sold for 33 cents per pound.

The value of this and the skim-milk amounted to \$23.97. The cost for feed was \$6.80, leaving a profit of \$17.17 for one cow for one month. The same man, living on a 160-acre farm in Gallia County, sold \$1500 worth of hogs during the year and as much more was received for cream. This showing was made in a county where the soil is supposed to be poor.

The activities of the association are also applied to the buying of fertilizers and feed. When orders are taken for the purchase of any large quantity of feed or fertilizer, each order must be accompanied by \$2 in cash. When the fertilizer arrives the buyer takes it from the car and pays for it at that time. Should he refuse to take it he forfeits the \$2.

A saving of several dollars per ton is effected by such co-operative buying. With such practical results as this already realized by several farmers' organizations in Ohio the outlook for this phase of co-operation is bright.

This Might Be Worse.

A Denver woman bought what she thought was a piece of land. But when she got a description of it she was horrified to find that this was what she had purchased:

"Fifteen and eight chains, ninety-two links, thirty-one chains and eight links, ninety-two and one-half links, more or less."

She rushed to the real estate agent. "This is a swindle," she said breathlessly; "I thought I was getting some property but I find I've purchased an iron or golf foundry. I don't know which; and I don't know whether I've got even that or not because it says 'more or less.'"

"That description refers to the survey," explained the agent. The purchaser was relieved and she apologized. "It is a rattling good bargain," she said, "and if you hear any more noises like it let me know."

Buy it now

Don't buy what you don't need, but buy what you do need, now. It will put thousands of idle men at work who are suffering this Winter

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