

Holstein—A Dual Purpose Cow

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THERE is a wide and ever increasing demand among the farmers in America for a good profitable dual purpose breed of cattle. The price of feed has become so high that the farmer can no longer afford to keep a cow that gives but enough milk to raise its calf for beef purposes, for in that case the calf has to show a profit, not only above the cost of its own keep but above the cost of its dam's keep also. If, on the other hand, instead of being a heavy expense, a cow can produce enough milk to properly raise its calf and to show a substantial profit for butterfat besides, it will be seen that the profits from beef production can be very greatly increased.

Practical experience and demonstrations by many different State Experiment Stations have proven two facts: First, that on the arable farm the dual purpose cow is more profitable than the specialized beef type; and, second, that the Holstein is the most profitable dual purpose cow.

The first fact is proven by the tests conducted by the Michigan Experiment Station, in which it was shown that the dual purpose steer averaged \$41.27 more net profit per head than the beef type of steer. In Bulletin No. 261 it is stated that the dual purpose or "skim milk fed lot of baby beefs showed as good a condition of flesh and quality as the suckled lots and were nearly equal in weight," and that "baby beef production by the skim milk method is much cheaper and gives better results than by suckling methods."

Dual Purpose Steer.

The Iowa Experiment Station states in Bulletin No. 48, after extended experiments, that "a system whereby dairying and meat making may be combined is most promising in its profits. It is not only possible to combine these qualities to a profitable degree, but also to perpetuate them, if the herd is bred especially for them. The feeding of range steers, at present prices, does not permit of securing much profit, in comparison with the returns that may be secured from the products of a herd bred for the special purpose of meeting conditions of a combination of dairying and beef making. Not only do steers from cows bred with this combination in view yield as much profit as those from the range, but returns from the cows, when used for dairy purposes, make the combination much more remunerative."

As it has been proven by actual tests that it costs \$32.32 a year to keep a beef cow solely to have a calf, while a Holstein cow will earn \$73.33 net profit in the same length of time, a beef steer has to start out in life with a handicap of over \$105 against him, while the Holstein steer has to its credit at birth.

In the past the dual purpose question has been discussed from the standpoint of whether the Shorthorn or other beef breeds are profitable for milk production, with a result, generally, to the discredit of the dual purpose type, and, on the other hand, the fact has been apparently overlooked that the Holstein is a most profitable breed for beef.

According to the results of the tests reported in the Michigan Experiment Station Bulletin No. 257, the Holsteins make much larger daily gains and at a less cost per pound than any of the leading beef breeds.

Nebraska Tests.

The Nebraska Experiment Station has probably made the most exhaustive and conclusive beef tests that have ever been made. Forty-eight calves representing the different breeds were put through two extended tests. In the first test, the Holsteins averaged \$3.68 profit per head, the Shorthorns \$2.07, the Herefords \$1.61, the Angus \$1.34, the Guernseys 21c, the Jerseys 63c, and the Red Polls, 21c. In the second test, the Holsteins averaged \$4.14 profit per head, the Shorthorns \$3.28, the Angus 80c and the Guernseys 76c; the Red Polls lost 97c and the Jerseys lost \$2.14. The Holstein steer No. 19 made \$16.61 net profit, or more than any other steer in these two tests. The heaviest Holstein weighed 1082 pounds at the end of the test, the heaviest Hereford 1040 pounds, the heaviest Shorthorn 1032 pounds, the heaviest Angus 925 pounds, the heaviest Guernsey 950 pounds, the heaviest Red Poll 920 pounds, and the heaviest Jersey 920 pounds.

That the ideal beef and milk form may be found in the highest degree in the same breed is shown by the

numerous prizes won by Holsteins at the different fat shows. At the New York State Fairs of 1889 and 1890, a Holstein cow won first prize as the best fat cow of any age or breed. Her live weight was 1790 pounds, and her percentage of dressed weight when thoroughly cooled was 66.3 per cent or 1196 pounds, a percentage very seldom equaled by individuals of the beef breeds.

In 1896, against very strong competition from the leading beef breeds, a Holstein cow weighing almost 2000 pounds won first prize as the best beef cow of any breed at the Minnesota State Fair.

Summarizing the results of these and other tests the result conclusively proves that, contrary to the general belief, large and profitable beef and milk production are correlated to an astonishing degree. In the Holstein breed, as a rule, the greater the milk producing qualities, the more perfect the work of assimilation and digestion, the larger and the more economical the gain of body weight when dry, the stronger the constitution, and the more regular the breeding, all of which qualities also tend to make beef production more profitable. A Holstein steer inherits from its dam a capacity for assimilating a quantity of feed that would make the average beef steer sweat merely to look at. According to the Wisconsin Dairy Competition, an average Holstein cow will consume enough feed above her own maintenance to produce 1758.1 pounds of milk solids in a year, or over three times as much as an average beef steer will gain in body weight in the same length of time.

Holstein Limitations.

While a Holstein steer is without doubt the most economical producer of dressed beef, yet it is true that the profitability of that breed for beef is subject to some limitations. Owing to their relatively heavy body, their limbs are too light to make them as well fitted for the range as some other breeds. The fact is that, while up to about 18 or 20 months of age a Holstein steer will have approximately the same conformation and quality as a beef steer, yet after that age he begins to partake more of the form of a dairy steer and also to lose some of his former smoothness, so that these steers are not relatively as profitable when sold as two or three-year-olds as when fattened up to sell as baby beef.

Holstein beef possesses the desired pale red color and is very well marbled, although it does not generally have so much fat as is exhibited by a beef steer. According to such authorities as Professor I. P. Roberts and others who have tested the qualities of both meats, Holstein beef has a superior flavor to that of the Shorthorn.

One of the most important if not the chief factor in cattle raising is that of prolificacy. In this respect the Holstein cow is much superior to any of the beef breeds, as she is easier to get into calf, due to her thinner condition, caused by her heavy milking qualities, and to the fact that the breeding qualities of the Holstein have not been impaired, as the breed has not been so highly inbred, or subjected to excessive show-ring fitting and other artificial conditions, as have the beef breeds.

Summarizing all of the results therefore, the fact is clearly proven that the dual purpose breed is a most lucrative type, and that the theory that beef and milk production cannot be profitably combined in the same breed is most erroneous and unreliable.

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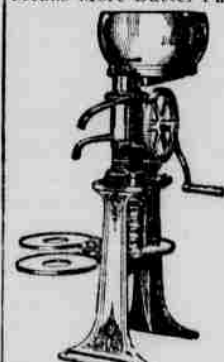
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