

Home of Purebred Herefords, Answer to Cattleman's Prayer, Has Single Drawback

When a whole family knows every member of a large herd of cattle, feels compassion for any one of the animals' least misfortune, and likes nothing better than taking pictures of them and talking about them—then, surely those cattle are of more than usual interest.

Casual personal acquaintance only with Roy Robinson and family, but with a background of much enthusiastic praise for his contribution to the livestock industry of the northwest, led the editor's family to accept gladly an invitation to visit the Robinson mountain farm south of Hardman last Sunday afternoon.

It was there that we gleaned some of the information explaining the Robinson family's love for the purebred Hereford cattle they have made a specialty since 1929, and since which time Mr. Robinson's name has become respectfully spoken on every cattle ranch in the northwest.

Just as a parenthesis, when on a visit in Wallowa county a few weeks ago we met a man who runs cattle out in the "north woods," thirty miles from Joseph. He had never been to Heppner, but in referring to probability of a visit here he remarked: "I may drop in there some time this fall. I understand a man by the name of Robinson has fine polled Herefords some place near there, and I want very much to get some of them."

Actually, there is no mystery about the fame of the Robinson cattle. The economic angle is easily explained by Mr. Robinson's statement that the average weight of his steers was increased by 150 pounds on no more and possibly less feed by introduction of the purebred stock, he having formerly raised grade animals. And as for the affection evidenced by Mr. and Mrs. Robinson, their daughter and two sons, it is largely accounted for by the gentle disposition, especially of the polled animals, that makes them so easily managed.

For novices at the cattle business, such as ourselves, it may be said that polled Herefords are a strain that reproduces without horns. Mr. Robinson has purebreds of both horned and polled strains as he finds some cattle men prefer the horned animals. A noticeable difference in docility of the two strains is evidenced from birth, however, he said, as the bull calves of the horned variety kick up their heels and show other signs of more friskiness right from the start.

Cattle men often refer to the pure-

bred Herefords as "white faces," as they are distinguished by white faces and other white markings on a solid red body. An evidence of the size is given by Mr. Robinson's statement that he showed a two-year-old bull at Condon last year that weighed 2800 pounds. Two large cows were pointed out, each of which weighed 1700, and the steers he was preparing to ship this week he expected would average 1100.

When we received this information we had already seen what more than a ton of beef clad in its distinctive red and white coating looked like in contrast to the predominantly green background of the landscape on upper Camas prairie. And it was a beautiful sight. Mr. and Mrs. Robinson and daughter drove part of the cattle, by car, down to the corral on the old Tom Graham place while our party was having lunch on the Canadian bluegrass on the slope a short distance below the watering trough fed from an ice cold spring by pipe. Shortly another bunch of the cattle came stringing on to the prairie of their own volition.

Mr. Robinson invited us into his car for a closer view, for while the animals showed the shyness of deer when approached on foot, they would come almost up to the car, inquisitively. Thus it was that we obtained "close-ups," and heard from the three Robinsons present much family history of a number of the animals viewed. A young bull showing lameness in one hind leg gave cause for concern, and Mr. Robinson promised himself to attend to the injury on the morrow. One fine looking cow was announced as the recent mother of twin calves. Showing our ignorance of such animals, we remarked that a stocky little bull calf must not be more than six weeks old, only to be informed that this youngest of animals in the herd had been introduced to the world exactly two weeks before.

We were surprised to learn that no rider was kept with the cattle. Mr. Robinson said his range was all well fenced, most of it accessible by car, and that the regular habits of the cattle made constant watching unnecessary.

Which leads us to the assumption that Mr. Robinson has one of the most ideally situated cattle ranches in the country. Headquarters for the summer operations are reached about two miles off the Heppner-Spray road, 18 miles from Hardman

—a distance, by the way, which the three children drove almost every day last winter to Hardman high school. To reach the house meadows of tame hay are skirted. mountain gems to look upon and one of the ranch's large assets.

All in all, it appeared the ultimate in a cattle raiser's dream of paradise. But Mr. Robinson opined all was not too well. Going from the house to the cattle, he stopped to show us the work of some trouble makers, though he viewed their work good naturedly.

We were taken into a grove of large quaking aspens, where we could see on approach that a considerable number of the trees had been felled. Among these we went to where the course of a stream was dry except for a large pool behind a dam—yes, the scene of activity of a colony of beaver. There were holes in the mud, possibly where the animals were hiding during our presence, and fresh chips about fallen trees, some 8 to 10 inches in diameter, gave evidence of the recent activity.

Determination of the little animals was evidenced, said Mr. Robinson, by the fact that he had but a few days before cleared out part of the dam to ditch off the water only to find the next day that the dam had again been thoroughly repaired.

In this instance what appeared to suit the desires of the cattle man wasn't at all to the beaver's liking.

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PLAYING GOOD BALL

Fred Hoskins is in receipt of a letter from Alexander McDonald, teacher in the Ione schools last year who left this spring to play ball with Bellingham in the northwest league. McDonald reported that he was in seventh place among hitters of the league. He is playing third base. The request was made to say hello to all his Morrow county

friends. He expects to attend University of Oregon the coming winter.

Mrs. Dessa Hofstetter and daughter, Miss Otillia, from Ontario were visiting friends and relatives in Heppner yesterday while Mrs. Hofstetter is on vacation from her work as county librarian for Malheur county.

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