

Essentials to Good Dairy Herd

FIRST let me speak of the sire. He should be a pure-bred animal, strong, healthy and well formed. But he may be all of these and be worthless as a sire. If he is to answer the purpose for which he is kept he must be able to transmit the qualities of a good dairy cow to his progeny. A few bulls will do this in a marked degree, but only a few.

In choosing a sire we need to pay particular attention to the history of the family from which he comes. A few years ago I bought a grade Jersey cow of a neighbor. She was nearly pure bred, but not quite. She was a noble animal. Three of her heifers, in fact, the only ones I have ever known about, were remarkable producers. I have two of them now. I seldom milk either of them without thinking of that old grade cow. For practical use on the farm, I would rather risk a bull from such a cow as that, even though she were a grade, than to take chances on a sire from a family that I knew nothing save that they were registered animals.

Bull's Pedigree Important.

Now, kind reader, do not make any mistake—I am not advising the use of a grade sire. I am only trying to show that after all, it is the family from which the bull comes that gives or does not give, reliable promise of his future usefulness.

Still, after all, the only way to really know a sire is to try him out. A number of the daughters of one of our association bulls will freshen this fall, and we are anxiously awaiting to see the result, for this will be the final test of the real worth of the animal into which we have put our money and a large measure of our confidence. If these heifers turn out as well as we hope, the days of this bull will be long on the earth. If they do not, then we can get rid of him and try again.

No matter how prepotent the sire may be, the individuality of the cow must always be considered. A few years ago one of our neighbors bought two cows in a near-by county. One of them proved to be of little value, but the other was the most remarkable cow that has yet been owned in our community. What was still better, she was a producer of heifer calves. Several of them have grown to maturity and in each instance they have been great producers.

It takes time to build up a dairy herd. Ordinarily, the cow produces only one calf each year, and a lot of these will never be cows. If the years were long enough one might use a very ordinary herd of cows as a foundation, and by breeding to a good sire he might some day have an excellent herd. But life is not long enough to wait for results from poor cows, even though they be bred to a good sire.

The man who is to produce a herd that is really worth while must have at least one or two excellent cows. If these cows come from the right kind of a family, that is to say, if their dams were good cows, and if good cows are the rule among those nearly related to them, then there is little doubt about the result when we are fortunate enough to get heifer calves from them.

Do not understand that I would not keep a heifer calf from an ordinary cow. Dairy products are in good demand and an average cow will produce some profit, but the dairyman should ever look forward to a time when the average cow in his herd will have given place to the great producer of butter-fat or milk, as the case may be. We will keep these fairly good cows for a time, but we will ever look forward to a day when it will no longer be necessary to have them in our herd because we have enough at last that are much better.

The Man an Important Factor.

The greatest factor after all, in the building of a profitable dairy and the last one of which I shall speak, is the man himself. He must read dairy literature, he must read in order to find out new things about his business, he must read to

keep up his interest in the work he has undertaken, and he must read to inspire courage.

It takes time to do any truly great thing, and this is what tests out the man. There are plenty of men who can work for a time along any given line, but the successful man must never lose his courage nor his faith in the thing he is endeavoring to do. He must be a worker, as dairying can hardly be called a pastime. It is real work, and the successful man in this business must not shrink from his share of actual labor.

He must like the business. If he does like it, he will like the cow and this fact will help a great deal. If he likes her he will be kind to her and kindness to a dairy cow is sure to pay out in dollars and cents. If he likes her he will study her, and more and more this matter of the results of right breeding and right feeding will appeal to him.

The best thing about it all is, perhaps, that in the end it will be found that the man has improved quite as much as his herd. There are some kinds of business that dwarf men. Others seem to have little influence over them. But the successful breeder of dairy cattle is sure to develop into a stronger and more able man as his business grows. —W. F. Taylor.

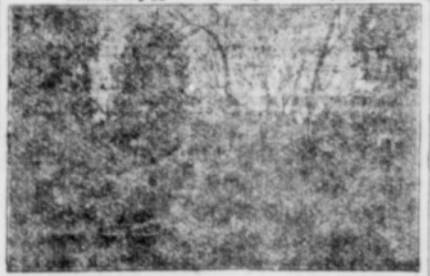
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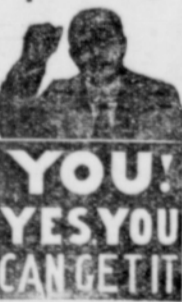
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