

THE PICTURESQUE DAIRIES OF EUROPE.

Government Investigation Shows Them Below the American Standard.

GUY ELLIOTT MITCHELL

We often hear of the model dairies of Europe, co-operative dairies into which a speck of dirt is never allowed to lodge, of Danish butter that is in truth a dream and brings a fabulous price, of eggs guaranteed fresh and country-like, and other reports of the way they do things on the fine old farms of Europe until one begins to think that one can not be more than half living in this country. But how much of this sort of thing will bear investigation and close analysis?

The Dairy Division of the United States Department of Agriculture is a progressive and useful institution and has done several things to destroy prevailing fallacies and incidentally establish the fact that American methods as a whole, in at least some phases of agriculture, are as far if not farther advanced than those of any other country.

Not the least interesting of such information gathered was that collected by the late Henry E. Alvord, for many years the chief of the Dairy Division in a tour of the countries of Europe



SELLING MILK IN DENMARK

for the purpose of looking into the dairy industry of the continent.

Major Alvord stated first, upon his return home, that while the United States has never evolved a strictly dairy cow of its own, it has now nothing to gain through the importation of new blood from Great Britain, the Channel Islands, the Netherlands, Denmark or France. There are many picturesque and useful breeds of milch cattle in these countries but they do not compare, he stated, with the adapted American breeds. For instance,



Holland Cheese

Market.

Danish Prize

Winners.

Brittany, in the north of France, has within its borders pretty, active little black-and-white cattle with marked dairy characteristics, producing often an astounding quantity of milk for their size, but they are believed to be useful in the United States only as playthings.

American Cow Stables Up to Average

In the stabling and general care of dairy cows no foreign country shows, in general practice, any methods or conditions better than our own. While the average conditions throughout the country are undoubtedly far from what they should be, the United States

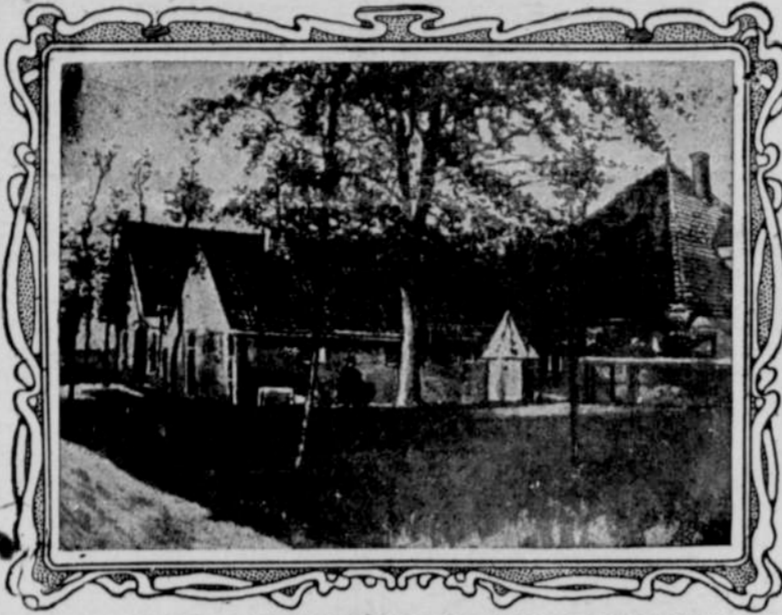


MODEL CO-OPERATIVE FRENCH CREAMERY

farmer and dairyman are making as rapid strides forward as can be found anywhere.

Major Alvord found comparatively few places in Holland and Switzerland where there is such close relationship between the dairy cows and families as the occupancy of connecting apartments, so often described in poetic fancy by European travelers. These

conditions do exist abroad—where the cow is taken in as a member of the family—as they do in no place in the United States, but they are the exception. Stables which in summer are converted into conservatories and rooms for weaving and cheese curing are the unusual and show places. The construction of cow stables generally in the dairy countries of the Old World is of a substantial nature, with little regard paid to light and ventilation,



COMBINED DWELLING AND COW STABLE IN DENMARK—STABLE IN FRONT

conveniences of arrangement or ease in cleaning. While much attention is paid to cleaning cow stables, it is apparently more from an appreciation of the value of the manure than from an effort to have sanitary conditions in the dairy.

Foreigners Provide Good Feed.

There is one thing where Europeans may be ahead of Americans. They seem to be better versed in the feeding of cattle. Even the poorest peasants do not hesitate to purchase concentrated cattle foods where necessary, yet it appears that the only reason the natives can give for this practice is the

tempt to compete with the Old World. In order to learn the bottom facts about making any of the famous specialties in cheese, it is necessary to go to the locality where they originate.

Making Dairy Work Popular.

Americans find novelty in Europe in the "fairs" and "markets" where products of the dairy are sold to the highest bidder. In Normandy the wives and daughters of farmers and peasants assemble by the hundred in the parks or along the streets, selling their "mottes" of butter. The cheese fairs of Frome, England, and Kilmarnock, Scotland, and the street markets of Alkmaar, Hoorn, and Utrecht, Holland, also present lively and interesting spectacles in connection with the sale of dairy products.

Major Alvord's observations show that while too much can not be said of the industry, frugality and thrift of Europe's dairymen, a close comparison leads one to feel that the conditions of the industry in the United States are decidedly more satisfactory in almost every particular.

room for improvement in our country, the only foreign country from which the United States can possibly learn anything is Denmark. There, the best creameries are models of cleanliness, good order, and systematic management. But all these details are accomplished only through a lavish expenditure of labor which would appal an American creamery manager. It is not an uncommon thing for six or eight persons to be constantly employed for six or eight hours a day, turning out a quantity of butter which is ordinarily made in this country by a man and a boy who have all the work finished daily at 3 or 4 o'clock in the afternoon.

Major Alvord found it impossible to draw any comparisons between the methods of cheese-making and the results in this country and those abroad. It is believed that the American factory system, common to the United States and Canada, is superior to anything elsewhere. In variety and fancy cheese this continent can not yet

large scale. The ordinary big green cucumber pickles are usually quite free from elder vinegar. The only way to make them edible is to soak the pickles in strong brine, to extract the acid, then to soak them in water to get out the brine, and finally pickle them in real vinegar.

Pure vinegar can be made as well from other fruits as from apples. Grapes, plums, and other fruits which contain a considerable proportion of sugar, which is converted into alcohol and then into acetic acid, make good vinegar.

The Department of Agriculture has in press a short bulletin on vinegars, which can be had upon application to members of Congress. It is known as Farmers' Bulletin No. 233 and is compiled from the work of the various agricultural experiment stations on this subject.

Thoroughbred Milch Goats.

Among the various European milch goats the Spanish goat is said to be foremost in the quantity and quality of milk given. The accompanying illustration is from a photograph taken by Explorer David G. Fairchild, of the Department of Agriculture.



SPANISH MILCH GOAT

ture, while he was touring Spain making observations of the milch goat industry of that country. The remarkable size of udder of this goat is nothing abnormal among the Spanish goats, but on the other hand is the general rule. Many of these goats give eight quarts of milk a day.

Briefs From Everywhere.

British Columbia is the only British province in America which has preserved the old English custom which obliges judges to wear wigs.

In Arizona Indian children may be seen catching ants and eating them, and in Mexico the honey ant is eagerly sought after by the natives as an article of food.

Nine-tenths of the people of Persia are Mahometans.

The Irish bogs, it is stated, could produce fifty million tons of peat a year for one thousand years.

The steel in the modern band-saw is of finer quality and will stand rougher usage than the far-famed Damascus blade of the ancients.

The physician in China collects no fee, but receives a percentage of the money paid to the apothecary.

Zorene, a new chemical compound, will, it is said, double the life of metals exposed to the air, such as bridges, vessels, tanks and the like.

An adulterator of food in Germany is liable to a term of imprisonment of six months and a fine of 1,200 marks.

A man will die for want of sleep in about ten days and for want of air in about five minutes.

A Laplander will sometimes travel on skates one hundred and fifty miles in a day.

Cromwell was a gypsy baiter. He once ordered them expelled from England and if they refused to depart by the next wind they should be hanged without delay.

A bee, carrying no burden, will fly at the rate of forty miles an hour. Carrying a load of honey his speed is reduced to about twelve miles.

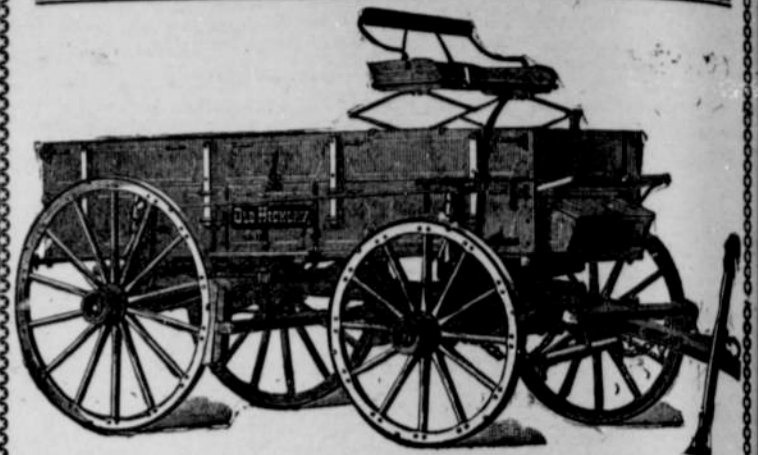


When Alexander asked his Aunt
What grew on an electric plant,
She answered, rather tart I fear
"Why, currents I suppose, my dear."

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