

Prosperity for the Beef Producer

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As we stand on the threshold of the nineteenth century peering into the future in the earnest endeavor to take advantage of our past experiences, we are confronted with an all-prevailing sense of changed and changing conditions. When we pause and consider that the great bulk of the territory west of St. Joseph a quarter of a century ago was considered a barren waste, in which a few straggling herds of cattle ranged, but in which systematic cattle raising was actually unknown, and compare that time with the conditions which exist in that territory today, we can but marvel that such a change could be wrought in so short a time. Then, one could settle where he would and have unlimited range with no one to dispute possession. Today, it is impossible to find a section of country within the confines of the United States or with Mexico and British America added, which is not occupied with the shepherd, herdsman or farmer, and if any one should locate anywhere in this vast territory, he must first purchase the right of a predecessor.

During the seventies and the eighties it became the fashion to organize cattle companies in this vast Western territory, and to draw on the Eastern states for supplies of breeding stock. Our Eastern markets, up to this time, had been able to take very good care of the supplies of cattle, so that when the Western demand for Eastern stuff set up, the normal supply of beef was curtailed, necessitating an increase of price for that which was marketed. Later, when the Western demand ceased and the Eastern stuff found its way to the beef markets, a normal condition was resumed for a while, until the surplus of the new that had been recently stocked became marketable, when the markets were inadequate to the increased supply. The profits of these Western cattle companies not being up to those assumed in the prospectus weakened their support and the surplus not being sufficient to pay dividends, whole herds were closed out. Falling prices, as a matter of course, followed this glut of cattle, and the low prices scared Eastern farmers into the belief that cattle raising would never more be profitable, and they sold short, thus still harder jolting the market, and the result was an avalanche of cattle which literally buried prices. Such a condition of things cannot occur again in this country, for the reason that there is no territory tributary to our markets from which an avalanche of cattle can descend. The markets now absorb the product of the entire United States, and their demands have already drawn upon the surplus of both Mexico and Canada. Thus these people who remember the boom of the eighties and also the collapse, have been erroneously looking forward to a collapse of the present prosperous condition of the cattle business, without studying carefully the causes of the former boom and its reaction, and comparing them with the causes of the present prosperity. We are glad to note that Secretary Wilson has recently come out with a statement that present profitable prices for cattle will continue. With the statistics gathered by the census of 1900, it is difficult to see how

a level-headed man can come to any other conclusion.

We are learning in this country by thorough and expensive object lessons that no one section of our population can prosper at the expense of another. We are interdependent upon each other, and as we become annually more and more expert in different lines of business, we become more and more specialists. A specialist is an expert in one particular industry or in a single branch of any industry. The specialist, while expert in his limited line, is dependent upon others in every other direction. Thus, while in certain sections of the South cotton is supreme, they are dependent upon outside territory for all other products. Take, for instance, the stupendous iron interests of the East. They are dependent upon outside territory for everything they eat and wear. What we may term as the grazing districts of the West, that is given entirely over to sheep and cattle raising, is dependent upon the farming states further east for everything except meat. While the farming states of Ohio, Mississippi and Missouri valleys alone, could exist by and within themselves, they do not attempt to do so, and the lands of these rich farms have so increased in value that farmers, to be successful thereon, are compelled to bring them to a higher state of cultivation through the adoption of the most intelligent agriculture. As these lands inevitably increase more and more in price, and the demands of grain raising encroach more and more upon the grain raising lands of these Central states, this territory will surely lose what little is left of its independence until in time we can expect to see this territory depend entirely and very properly upon the grazing districts of the West for its supply of live stock. Were it not for the ranches of the West today, there would indeed be a beef famine. Calves can be raised on the ranges when the proper blood is used, of as good quality as can be raised in the more favorable agricultural regions; that is, as long as these calves have their mother's milk and the grass to sustain them. But these calves cannot be successfully wintered in the range country. That is to say, it is impossible to winter these calves or any cattle, for that matter, upon the ranges without great loss of flesh. There will come a day when the demands of the beef market will compel the saving of the awful waste that now annually occurs in the winter throughout the entire range country. Ranchmen are turning their attention more and more to raising rough feeds and we predict that before many years, cattle raised in the range country and destined directly for the beef markets, will all be removed from the range to the farming districts at weaning time in the fall, and the feed that is provided on the range will be used for the development and sustenance of the she stuff. There is comparatively little loss in allowing the breeding herd to become thin in the winter time, so long as they are kept in a strong, healthy breeding condition, but in young animals destined for the feed lots, every pound of flesh wasted will cost to replace it as much feed as would, under more favorable circumstances, produce

two pounds or more of additional weight.

Removing calves from the ranges at weaning time to the blue grass pastures, clover stacks and corn cribs of farming states and immediately putting them in training for the beef market, has more than one advantage. It has been demonstrated beyond dispute that a bushel of corn will make double the gain on a calf that can be made by the same amount of feed on an older or stunted steer. The younger animal, the greater the gain for the amount of food consumed.

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The glut in the market, whenever there is one, has never been occasioned by really prime cattle. There has ever been "room at the top," and assuredly always will be. It was the avalanche of cheap cattle that caused the glut, and they interfered with prime stock only in so far as consumers would consent to substituting the inferior beef for the real good article. These prosperous times are causing people to pay more attention to good living, and tend to increase the market for good beef, because there is nothing that man puts in his mouth that is so delicious or equal in nutrition to good beef, and when a person has a taste of the real prime article they will never thereafter be satisfied with inferior.

I have but touched in a crude and disconnected way on the present condition of the beef trade. Volumes could be written on the various phases of it. I have no desire to mislead myself or any one else, as the cattle interest is my sole interest and with it I rise or fall. Having no other business and being dependent upon cattle, I cannot afford to delude myself, and must of necessity try earnestly to look matters squarely in the face. But with decreasing numbers of cattle, as shown by the census, and with increasing home and foreign markets, we are unable to see, nor has any one thus far been able to point out to us any probable method for the increase of the beef supply that will not offset by the increase in the demand for beef. Therefore, we can but conclude that the present prosperity in the beef trade is permanent, which prosperity must inevitably increase.

THOSE TUBES AGAIN.

Editor The Ranch: In The Ranch of September 12 I observe the recipe of Mr. J. S. Harrison for obviating trouble with debris in the lateral and head ditch while irrigating. He says:

"Set check boxes in lateral from main canal to end of head ditch, so as to prevent all scouring and seed the banks to white clover.

It is refreshing to see how easily your correspondent solves a problem that will probably be worrying the old veterans when the next centennial draws to a close. It would appear from surface indications that Brother Harrison has not a very firm "grasp" on the situation.

At this season of the year and from now on to November 1, the water is usually only clear in the river and with a low pressure in the canal no trouble will be experienced. On the first of April, when the water is turned into the canal, the river is very muddy, and continues so for some time.

This mud that comes into the main canal must find its way out into the laterals that supply the different districts and from these laterals into the head ditches, where it is distributed

on the individual farms. From these head ditches it has to find an escape in some way. A portion of it settles in the bottom of the ditches, and a part of it passes out through the tubes in the ditches, or through the openings in the flume—as the case may be. Now, the check-boxes, which are only used in ditches that have too much fall for a natural water grade—have about as much influence on this sediment as the rise and fall of the tides. The "checks" can neither prevent its getting into the ditches, nor assist in passing it out through the openings. If the water from the head ditch is being fed into a long irrigating furrow on nearly level ground, the opening in the tube may be large enough to let it clear itself. If the water is running into furrows that have a sharp incline, it is necessary to close the opening in the tube down to a very small stream in order to prevent washing of the soil. The smaller the opening the more easily it clogs up. And when the water is very muddy you are "up against it." The trouble does not originate in the head ditch, nor in the lateral. It comes either from swollen streams that feed the Yakima river, or from erosion in the main canal when there is a heavy pressure on. Of course, a new lateral with considerable fall would give trouble, even with perfectly clear water in the main canal, until the water has formed a solid bed foundation. But this is insignificant as compared with the silt coming down the main canal. Later on, as the water gets clear, the green scum that forms in stagnant or slow-running water during hot weather comes floating down, and always finds the tubes. Checks have no effect upon it, for the same difficulty is met with in a flume.

Clover planted along the ditch will solidify the banks, prevent washing, and keep down the weed crop. But I have never known any one to seed the banks to clover for the purpose of keeping the green scum from floating, nor preventing the sediment from coming down the Yakima river. Evidently, Brother Harrison will have to guess again.

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A TRIP TO SNOHOMISH AND WHATCOM.

Among the many fine valleys of Western Washington, Cherry valley, in King county, and Tualco, in Snohomish county, are finely adapted to dairying, as the rich, moist soil keeps the grass green and growing all through the dry summer. Most of the farmers are turning to making meat and milk from their feed, and raising less grain for sale each year.

Mr. Abel Johnson of Snohomish threshed 170 bushels of good oats from an acre of ground further north. The crops are almost entirely oats and hay, both a very satisfactory yield and price this year. A. L. Wilhite of Stanwood threshed 1,560 bushels of choice banner oats from eleven acres of land that he bought about three years ago at \$65 per acre. By judicious farming and good management he has made a good farm and home clear of debt in the past few years. He finished sowing oats March 25, which his neighbors thought two weeks too early, but on drained ground he prefers to sow early, harvest early and get heavy, bright grain.

At Conway Mr. Richard Holyoke has a rich farm on the Skagit that gives evidence of years of neat, good man-