

# LIVESTOCK ON THE FARM

By PRESIDENT E. A. BRYAN, in the Washington Agriculturist

**I**N the livestock industry on the farm, after a decision of the kind of stock which the farmer will like and in which he will take the greatest interest and pride, the most important question for him to decide is on the breed and blood. A certain quantity of feed and care and shelter, put into a Jersey steer, for example, to bring him on to a three-year-old, will not yield in cash, even the small fraction of the return for the labor and capital expended, as will the same outlay on a Hereford steer. The opposite would be true of the Hereford cow, and the Jersey milch cow. But even within the limits of any given breed and purpose, blood will tell and is worth paying for. Farmers, all too generally, have in mind an average price which an average animal is worth and will give only a little more for the best breeding stock which they can buy. It is like the school directors who will pay a certain price for the poorest teacher that can get a license to teach school and will give only five dollars a month more for the best. For the foundation stock of any kind, one can afford to pay double, treble, quadruple, what he would pay for the average or under. I do not forget that there is much along pedigree, high priced stuff, which neither in constitution, conformation, nor performance, deserves the high prices asked and paid. I do not forget that by skillful advertising, by insinuating agents, by covering the frame with unnecessary fat, by anointing with oil and bedecking with ribbons, and by worse practices still, breeding animals are often forced onto men and communities at great loss. I do not forget that the breeding of pure bred registered livestock for the market is a hazardous and often a disastrous enterprise. I do not forget that there are numerous hybrids or grades in horses, cattle, sheep and swine, which look "good" and are good for the immediate purpose. But for breeding purposes they are bad, desperately bad, for scientific reasons which I cannot detail. Indiscriminate mixing of all kinds of blood brings a race of mongrels from which you cannot escape. "Blood will tell." Therefore be careful at the onset to have good and uniform blood. One side or the other should be pure breed—and that of course means the sire. It is very unwise for a multitude of farmers to rush into the breeding of registered animals for sale for breeding purposes. Better buy at a long price—it will be vastly cheaper. But breed to pure bred sires—whether cattle, horses, sheep, or swine. The sire and the dam should be well mated. They must not only be of the same breed, but of the same type of the breed. The man who thinks he can mate the Jersey and Holstein and get the richness of the Jersey and the great quantity of the Holstein gets the small quantity of the Jersey and the low butter fat of the Holstein. He ought not be surprised. Or, he mates the cayuse with the Clyde, thinking he will get the size and disposition of the Clyde and the nimbleness and toughness of the cayuse. But he gets the hind end of the Clyde and the cigar-shaped front of the cayuse. It sticks deep in some farmers' minds that a cross is essentially good. It is not. Some crosses are good. A Poland China dam and a Berkshire sire often give a splendid first generation. But you should never let it go further. But, I say again, within the limit of a given breed, and even a given strain, mate well for conformation, constitution and uniformity. Prune the herd hard. But when you once have the requisite number of good dams and the proper sire, hold onto them and to selected descendants like grim death. Always keep the best for yourself. Do not become enamoured of some beautiful mongrel offspring that you desert your principle of pure blood on one side and degenerate into the production of mongrels. And do not be too much afraid of inbreeding unless you are producing breeding stock for the market.

## Feeding

In feeding of farm stock we have the principles of "concentration" just

as we have in mining. Feed weighing a large amount is concentrated into meat or wool, or butter or cheese, weighing a relatively small amount. From another point of view, it is the process of manufacture—the converting into a valuable finished product the rough, coarse material products of the farm. Here great skill is needed; first, to get a large product out of the soil at the lowest cost; second, to avoid the natural growth of the land to go to waste; third, to feed in such combination and such variety as to get the maximum result; fourth, to avoid losing what has been gained.

The last point is the one wherein we are the chief sinners.

Hogs are typical. The hog is all appetite. If he is healthy he will eat three square meals a day, or more, for 365 days in the year and grunt for more. That is the hog's greatest virtue. And it turns its feed to good account too, for it has a mighty good digestion. The hog is not very particular tastes good, and nearly every thing tastes good to a hog—grain, alfalfa, clover, weeds, and slops. It is a carnivorous, herbivorous, and omnivorous animal. Yet it requires more care in feeding than does the horse, the cow, or the sheep. It gains quickly from feed, and loses just as quickly through the lack of feed. To do it rightly, you should so adjust its feed that it gains uniformly every day from the cradle to the block. I know how sweet they say the Arkansas razor back is, but with you it is a question of profit and loss and you can not afford to raise the razor back. Use the pig as a scavenger if you will, but supplement its net gains there with enough to give net gains in its weight and in the weight of your pocketbook. Hog off wheat, peas or corn, if you can do so profitably, but do not let a day go by when a good gain has not been made.

In the case of the lamb, the calf, and the colt, up to the market age, the same principle applies, but in a different way. With any sort of provision, the summer, well begun, carry them forward on the natural supply and with little labor until winter begins to change and limit the supply of available food. In too many cases the animal is carried through its first and second winter on the range system. The stubble field and the straw stack do their best to protect and sustain life till the fields are green again. No growth, no progress, only a holding on and a slipping backwards, day by day, longing for the chinooks to blow and the buds and grass to appear again. Animals eat to supply heat, just as the stove eats wood. Before life processes result in growth the heat supply must be kept up. Barns, then, good warm ones, well ventilated, sanitary, are the cheapest investments in livestock production that the farmer ever makes. Economy of space, of feeding arrangements, of storage, is high economy. The same food stored in barns and silos yields more than unstored in open fields.

## By Products

With the best breeding and the best care and feeding, the price of the principal product well marketed may do little more than return the labor and capital invested with reasonable interest and no profit. The development of manufacture everywhere has been the history of the utilizing of the by products. In no industry is this more vital than in agriculture; and that part of agriculture we call animal husbandry is no exception to the rule. The livestock itself may be a by product, or may be kept chiefly for utilizing what otherwise would be waste. But in the products of the live stock we find one of the most important considerations of the system. I need hardly say that the chief by product is manure. Cropping in the cereals, hay, fruit, and what not, with the sale and removal from the soil, can have but one end—the impoverishment of the soil. The feeding of the entire animal product, whether of pasturage or of cultivated crops, and the return of the same to the soil by wise animal husbandry will maintain and increase the fertility. Every people must come to this system or the soil will perish. Italy, France,

Germany, Holland, England, and other countries with increasing population, have been able to maintain and increase the productivity of their soils. We have been a nation of wasters and have impoverished and destroyed in a few years the riches that nature had produced in long ages. Our densest population and greatest civilization may yet be found in the delta of the Mississippi, where we may attempt to follow up and reclaim a part of the soil sent down the stream to that low and malarial land.

No greater fraud has been perpetrated on the people of any part of the United States than the conservation fraud as applied and yet to be applied to the Pacific Northwest. Yet, beginning in an awakening consciousness that we are a nation of wasters as well as a nation of spenders, and a desire to atone for our sins, the movement at least gave us a word, a popular word, "Conservation," and this suggests that one of the chief merits of livestock on the farm is the conservation of time which it makes possible. The largest source of income to the small farmer is the income of his labor and that of his family. One hundred and sixty acres of good land may be reckoned at \$8000. Interest may be reckoned at six per cent. If the farm is all paid for and not under mortgage, the interest on the capital invested would be \$480. The interest on the work stock and tools might increase this, say to \$600; the rest must be the returns from labor. At \$2.00 per day for 300 days, leaving out holidays, there would be another \$600. This would give \$1200 a year for the support and education of the family and increase in wealth. Most of this would, of course, not appear in cash or be able to be measured, but would appear in the living of the family, leaving a small money surplus perhaps, but most of the increase in the property on the place. It is clearly vital, therefore, that a full opportunity for productive labor be open, for it is only a favored few who do not have the charges of the mortgage or similar burden to bear. Now it is equally clear that the livestock industry alone opens up this opportunity. Wheat farming offers on the average not more than 100 days out of the 365 for productive labor. Other single-crop systems have similar drawbacks. They also make sharp demands for a larger supply of labor than that of the family at critical periods and this calls for outgo instead of income. That the family's own productive labor may be spread out over as many days of the year as the merchants or the bookkeeper's or the railway agent's is the consideration.

## Organization

One of the chief virtues of the livestock system on the farm is that it fits almost any scheme of organization. We talk much of diversified farming, and yet it is not diversity for diversities sake that we want. We all admit that the principle of diversion of labor is applicable in agriculture as elsewhere. It follows that a chief interest, be it alfalfa production, or wheat raising, or beef production or potatoes, or what-so-ever, is not only admissible, but desirable. Having the thing of chief importance, and the industry of second degree, the rest are fitted into a perfect whole. Chief products and by-products and system of marketing are all fitted together. Into any and every system of farming livestock fits. It may be principle. It may be subordinate, but it may be made to fit. Those orchard patches in our valleys may well be made to exemplify the vital importance of animal husbandry. Even if your draft animals are confined to one old mare, you may raise a colt, which, when mature, may weigh a ton, and boost the family purse. Pigs may produce the family meat and more. A cow or two may yield a veal or two besides the milk and butter for the family, and more. Even when there is not a half acre of pasture, soiling crops intensely produced may support the animals. It is not great estates with great herds of horses and cattle to which we may look as the source of supply, but the small place with a few head of animals.

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