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Pasture Notes.

SELECTING THE HEIFERS.

There is an old saying that a cow cannot produce both "milk and beef." It may, to a certain extent, be correct, although there are many animals scattered about the country that come very near to upsetting the truth of that saying. In selecting the heifers we are generally on the look-out for what we hope will eventually become a "general purpose" cow. To the man who holds the opinion that if a cow milks well during her life it matters not what her end these remarks will not apply, as the majority of farmers do not hold that opinion. What is required is an animal that will give a good account of herself all through her life, and will finish up something more than a bag of bones; also, we require an animal that will breed a good calf, which will pay if kept for rearing, or will readily sell for that purpose. In selecting the animals, perhaps the chief point to obtain is a good constitution, and therein a breeder has a distinct advantage over a buyer who does not know the percentage of the animals he selects. There are certain points which indicate robustness or otherwise.

To judge a heifer correctly she should be seen a few days after calving, when her udder is at its best, and shows its capabilities, for as milk is her principal product, the size and shape of this is naturally important. It should be large, square, and well set. The teats, which should be moderately long enough to allow full-handed milking, should be well set apart, though it should be remembered that the teats get bigger by using, and therefore smaller teats are to be preferred to very large ones in a heifer. They should be set square on the udder, and should be of even thickness; thick or thin-necked teats should be avoided. Whilst lying well forward under the belly, it is of equal importance that the udder should show well behind, filling up between the thighs and extending upwards.

There ought to be plenty of loose skin at the back part; this is an indication of greater possibilities in the future. The milk veins, which run on each side of the belly to supply blood to the udder, should be moderately developed, and not too thick; the best milkers by no means have the most prominent veins. The udder should be covered with fine, soft hair, not too thick or coarse, as this, whilst showing robustness, often indicates coarseness.

In general appearance a heifer should certainly be feminine-looking, with a broad head across the eyes and forehead, eyes prominent and mild in expression. Beware of an animal that has a very wild, scared look, fine muzzle, and horns medium thickness, fine and tapering. The masculine-headed cow is not advised as she is not always to be relied upon as being a regular breeder, and very rarely gives very great satisfaction in the milk pail. The neck should be fairly long, and should taper from the shoulders, running in a direct line down the back and carrying the head level and firm. The shoulders should be well built and sloping, rather narrower at the top, but with plenty of width below, forelegs well apart, showing an expansive chest. Narrow-chested, weak animals should not be kept; well-sprung ribs, and a capacious stomach to digest plenty of food, and supply the other parts of the body with nutriment.

The back long and straight, with strong loins, hind legs well set apart, so as to leave plenty of room for the udder, and the skin should be fairly thick, soft, and loose, and should feel mellow to the touch, with plenty of fine, silky hair covering it.

Beware of thin, hard skins; they usually denote a bad constitution. The tail should be fairly long and tapering, with plenty of hair at the end. One great point to remember when buying heifers is that if one wishes to purchase good stock one must not expect to go into the sale-yard and purchase all that are wanted straight away.

BOOM IN PIGS.

In our notes in this issue we record prices realised at sales of pedigree pigs held recently in England. Commenting on this boom, the "Mark Lane Express" remarks that it almost looks that one way of making money in England just now is to work up a herd of pedigree pigs and then arrange a sale for them. It doesn't seem to matter whether they are Gloucester Old Sports, Large Blacks, Berkshires, or any other breed, so long as they claim the distinction of being pedigree. Recent events seem to show that they will find a ready sale, and there appears to be a kind of competition between purchasers for the post of honour

in paying the highest prices for choice animals. Our London contemporary does not venture to anticipate just how long this will last, but pigs increase quickly; breeders of pedigree animals, seeing what others have done, follow their examples in organising sales, and it may be assumed that in paying record prices for sows and boars buyers do it with the object of forming still more herds. By increasing the number of pedigree pigs in the country, the standard of the average pigs kept not for breeding purposes, but consumption, is raised, because all the progeny of pedigree pigs do not figure in the Herd Book, and the influence of breed is seen in the pigs that go to the butcher.



HORTICULTURE.

In the past it was the practice to grow a much greater variety of annuals than is usual now as growers have got more into the way of specialising and thus take greater interest in having good collections of a few kinds rather than a great many kinds. The result of this is that many things quite common in the past are rarely seen now and even the catalogues of the large seed firms are found to contain fewer kinds, but more and improved varieties of the popular kinds such as stock Asters, Phlox, Drummondii, Sweet Peas, etc. Even Mignonette, once seen in every garden, seems now but little grown, and such things as Nemophila, Candytuft, etc., are rarely seen.

Asters.—These are divided now into quite a number of sections of shades and colours almost without number. Both double and single. The giant single varieties give great satisfaction as they are easily grown and useful for cutting, as well as giving extremely beautiful shades and tints of colour, and also on account of their branching habit give a comparatively long season of bloom. The Comet and Ostrich plume varieties are especially graceful and attractive on account of their large loose wavy blooms and are good growers. The Chrysanthemum flowered varieties are also excellent both in form and colour and grow well; and many other sections such as Victoria, Anemone, flowered etc., will be found in seed lists.

As a dwarf garden annual, Phlox Drummondii reigns supreme, easily grown, almost every colour, and continuing in bloom for a very long period. The best effect is obtained by keeping the colours separate, and growing in good clumps although on account of its trailing habit it is extremely useful for filling up between taller growing plants.

Salpiglossis is rather tall growing and thus is better in fairly good shelter, but the up-to-date varieties with their large velvety, richly pencilled and veined flowers are superb, the colours including rich deep purples and blues, and crimsons, as well as both dark and pale yellows. The seed may be sown outside and with fairly rich soil it will thrive with very little trouble given to it.

Bartonia Aurea is a fine dwarf with large open flowers of a rich golden yellow, in profusion, and with a long season of bloom. Sow outside and let it look after itself.

Brachycome or Swan River Daisy—blue, white and rose. The blue is especially worth growing, and with its feathery green foliage makes a lovely clump six to nine inches high with a mass of bright blue flowers like small Cinerarias, and continues a long time in bloom. Sow where it is to grow.

Eschscholtzias have been greatly improved and some of the new varieties are worthy of any garden, especially the orange and crimson shades, the bright crimson being especially striking.

Dimorphsteca, with its many coloured hybrids, is an especially showy annual with large Marguerite-like flowers in dense masses about a foot high. Sow outside and simply let it grow.

Dianthus (or Japanese pinks), deserve to be grown more than they are as they are easy to grow, useful for cutting, and give charming and brilliant effects. There are many shades of colour from pure white to scarlet.

Godetia.—This is an extremely showy hardy annual of great variety both in form and colour, and varying in height from the little edging varieties of six inches to the tall border varieties up to three feet with flowers, white, pink, crimson and mottled. Sow outside where it is to bloom.

GARDEN NOTES.

SPRAYING FRUIT TREES.

There can be no question as to the efficacy of the lime, sulphur, and salt mixture as a winter wash for spraying fruit trees, more especially for trees that are very badly affected with mussel and San Jose or oyster scale, etc. Many mixtures have been tried and experiments carried out with them in the Homeland and in America, but nearly all agree that for a winter spraying nothing is more effectual than this mixture. It originally was a sheep dip used in California by a large sheep farmer, and it was a mere accident that it was used at all for gardening. A neighbour's fruit trees were so bad with San Jose scale that he was almost despairing, when this farmer persuaded the orchardist to try the sheep dip upon the trees. To the astonishment of all concerned, after the spraying had been tried not a living scale could be found, unless upon places that the solution had not touched. No doubt the trouble of making it is the great drawback to its becoming very popular, but bad cases need strong measures, and strong measures at the first often save a deal of worry and anxiety afterwards. Some will say: "What about Scalecide, Montauk, and Blytorph?" These are good; I have tried them all, and they are first-rate for early spring spraying just before the buds burst. They are of the oily nature, and are very much easier made into a wash. Scalecide and Blytorph mix readily in cold water. But I have found Montauk much more effectual and safer to use if made hot with soapy water, it then mixes more freely, and it not so liable to be too strong or too weak by separating. These washes are to be mixed according to the directions upon the tins, varying from one gallon of the liquid to 20, 30, and as high as 50 gallons of water, the latter amount for a second spraying.

Now we will proceed with the lime, sulphur, and salt. To prepare it take 50lb of best unslaked lime, flower of sulphur 100lb, water to make 55 gallons. Put 10 gallons of water into an iron boiler; bring it to the boil; then add 10lb of the fine slaked lime, next the sulphur. This is best mixed into a thick paste with hot water before placing in the boiler. When all is in, boil for 30 or 40 minutes, until the liquid becomes a blood or deep bronze colour. Thoroughly stir, and add sufficient water to make 55 gallons; then add 10lb salt, and bring the whole to a vigorous boil for about fifty minutes; strain off and keep in a barrel. If the barrel is not quite full pour in a small quantity of kerosene to prevent a crust forming. Then this liquid may be drawn off as required, adding one part liquid to 12 parts of water for winter use, or 1 part of the liquid to 30 parts of water for summer use. Small quantities can be made proportionately. Copper boilers must not on any account be used, and care should be taken not to stir up the lime or sediment when drawing off for use, or it may get into the nozzle of the spray. If only small quantities are required it need not be put into barrels, but used straight away; but care must be taken to add the proper amount of water, and hot water is preferred. It is then more effective if the solution is used hot.

The old boiled lime, and sulphur wash may be made successfully in kerosene tins for a few trees or a small fruit garden. In this case take 7½lb unslaked lime, 7½lb powdered sulphur, 7½lb salt, and 20 gallons of water. First boil one gallon of the water adding the sulphur and half the lime, after being slaked, and half the salt. Boil this, as with the larger lot, 40 or 50 minutes; then have a large tub, and mix the whole of the remainder of the lime and salt, stirring briskly, and adding the extra amount of boiling water required to make the 25 gallons. Then let it settle, and strain and use as required. This is for a winter wash only.

This makes a good wash for red spider and red brodia, those very troublesome pests that attack the foliage of apple trees in summer, and also apple scab, etc., but for this summer wash it must be diluted to 1 in 20 and sprayed well in and all over the foliage.

THE VEGETABLE GARDEN.

The work in this department during this month and for a few weeks will entirely depend upon the weather. When the ground will bear treading upon without sticking to one's feet take advantage of every favourable hour, for much may be done. Collect rubbish, hedge clippings, etc., and make a slow fire and burn them. If the weather is open and dry trench spare plots, and make ready well-manured ground for the sowing of peas and broad beans. Push on all preparatory work as speedily as possible.

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