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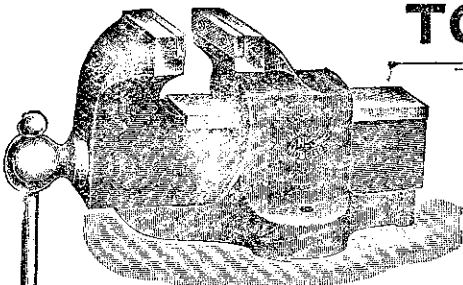
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THE FARM.

(By "Furrow").

HOW OFTEN MILKED?

It has long been known that the quantity of milk which cows will give, even the quality, is dependent upon the way in which the manner of milking is carried out, says an exchange. Therefore the value of good and quick milkers is obvious. Much has been written about the extra milk which can be obtained by more frequent milking, but it seems from competent judgment that this has been much over-rated, not so much as to the amount obtainable as to the feasibility of carrying it out in practice.

Indeed, practical results indicate that milking three times a day only gives six to seven per cent extra milk, and this may not pay in many herds, though four times daily may be an improvement with deep milkers, because it is found that the milk continuously increases the oftener it is drawn, though there is a limit to this. In some interesting experiments where this was put to the test at twelve, six, four and two hours' intervals, the milk drawn increased in about the following proportions, 5½, 6½, 8½, 9½, up to 10 at hourly intervals, but suddenly dropped to 1½ when the interval was curtailed by a quarter of an hour.

It seems pretty clear that the more empty the udder is of milk the faster it comes along into the teat, even if it is not manufactured to a large extent during the process of milking, which is one theory—for the udder cannot possibly hold it all—and it is believed at the present day that it is made from the blood by the very delicate machinery of the circulation. This may supply a reason for the greater adequacy of frequent milking, and though Nature is very retentive of her secrets in this direction, some knowledge of this kind tends to explain why cows are so susceptible to the manner in which they are milked. The advantages of quick milking are perhaps more easily accounted for by a consideration of these circumstances than are those of more frequent milking, and here there seems to be much more tendency to improved quality than increase in quantity, though this is hardly in accordance with American experience, for Dr. Babcock found quality improved by 10 per cent of butterfat, while only 2 to 13 per cent. increase in the amount of milk drawn was observed.

The differences in morning and evening milk are well known, but as far as quantity is concerned perhaps this is not so common as may be imagined, for the writer recently found the occupier of a farm on which he was living was apparently unaware of this very familiar fact, or his own either. The milking was at 10 or 10½ hours' day interval, which, of course, is in favour of equal returns night and morning, likewise of equalising the richness. Some East of Scotland trials showed that twelve hours' intervals reduced the discrepancy to 60 per cent., a mere nothing from a substantial amount.

This recalls the suggestion which someone once put forward of milking once a day only by adopting the ingenious plan of advancing and retarding the two operations by one minute per day until the times coincided!

THE COW.

AN AMERICAN APPRECIATION.

Most potent of all single influences in the building of this, the mightiest nation in history, is the "cow." Her sons drew the ploughs which first cultivated the land of the new world; hauled to market the produce of the fields, and with slow energy moved the chattels and household goods beyond the mountains to new homes in the further west.

They supplied the beef which is the food of the Anglo-Saxon, a race that was never conquered since history began. They furnished the shoes of the pioneers who trod the unknown wilds, and made of them the farmsteads and cities of our present enlightenment. They gave the clothes and robes to protect the pioneer against the destroying blast of winter, and made commerce possible before the railway was. They covered the chair upon which he sat, filled the mattress upon which he slept, and glued together the furniture he used.

The old cow is the mother of the whole bovine and foster-mother of half the human race. From the roadside weed she manufactures the most nourishing of human foods. She is the ready aid of the farmer, the pet of the rich man and the ever-present help of the poor. She is the economist of the people and the conservator of their resources. She partakes of the grass of the fields, and leaves the farm the richer for her presence.

The Poultry-Yard

(By S.Q.M.).

HOW TO SELECT THE LAYERS.

The times are changed since those days when poultry breeders were content to produce fowls of undeniable high quality, as shown in type, markings in the feather, and other fancy distinctions, but had an utter disregard and a cool contempt for economical egg production. The fact is to-day palpable, whatever may be the reason, that poultry breeders, whether their object is for exhibition birds or whether their idea is to produce fowls with inordinate power of egg production, work on a more business-like basis. They must have a reason for their existence other than type, "feather," and those other etceteras that go towards making up the poultry exhibitor's ideal of beauty.

In the past I have heard breeders say—and say it with a certain amount of pride—that several of their blue-blooded hens would not lay more eggs than sufficient for a couple of hatches in the 12 months; but they added that half of the hatched birds would turn out winners at the next season's shows. But now he would be a venturesome man who would advertise the fact that his hens would be, from an economic point of view, practically a burden to their owner. Such a class of stock, whether the strain be "exhibition" or "utility," is unwanted at the present time. For it may be taken for granted that every breeder of poultry, unless he carries his head in the clouds, insists that his hens be a profitable proposition.

Having these matters in mind, and desiring to keep in touch with the times, it is essential that some means be devised by which the selection of profitable stock may be ensured. These means are very necessary in establishments where pedigree is non-existent, and where there is little or no accommodation for the individual testing of the breeding hens. But, in all cases, no matter what the device is or methods for gaining accurate knowledge of a hen's productive capacity may be, there is always the unsolvable present. For we may have pedigree, appearance, measurements, and other methods which are applied for the selection of bountiful egg-producers, and yet the individual hen may as a producer, turn out to be a rank failure.

This uncertainty is markedly noticeable in the lists issued by various egg-laying competition establishments, where a number of hens from the one breeder is competing. A couple of those hens may be in a good position in the published list, while three, four, or more, may be near the bottom. Yet these hens are probably of the one strain, have been as well cared for as the leaders, and, without doubt, have been submitted to the particular methods adopted for the better selection of egg-producers. All systems break down before the unsolvable. And the unsolvable is secreted in the breast of Nature.

In seeking for the best layers, do not pin your faith in the tests of pullets, for the simple reason that in the first year's laying results the pullet is at its best, and may give good to excellent results—results that may prove in the end "too sweet to be substantial." And whether you judge for production by pedigree or appearance, let soundness of constitution be the first essential.

There are many points to be considered when culling for the best layers. The chief of these points are the age of the bird, the time of the year, the quality of skin and bone, the condition of the bird, and its general appearance.

The age of the bird is important, for after the first laying season the production of eggs varies considerably, and if, as it should be, a second, third, or even a fourth season hen is required for the breeding pen, this variation must be fully allowed for. The variation of production is invariably on the lower grade, according to the age of the bird. A fall of 15 per cent. in egg production between the output of the pullet and the second season hen may be taken as a groundwork in estimating the likely production of the latter, a further decline of 10 per cent. has to be considered per annum as the age increases. If such a hen gives fair returns and continues in bodily vigour, she is not to be despised, and may be bred from in the firm belief that her progeny will be able to earn their oats. It is not the hen with an abnormal capacity for egg production that ensures success; so having fair results from a sound constitution hen, be content, for such a hen properly mated may, with advantage, be relegated to the breeding pen. The time of the year is a factor that is inseparable in any system of selection. In the early autumn, and during the moulting time especially a hen is weakened in its power for egg production.

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