

OUR FARM PAGE: ITEMS OF INTEREST TO EVERY FARMER

Agricultural Supplies Committee to Investigate Farm Costs and Prices

In view of the importance of maintaining farm costs in line with the prices of things farmers sell, the Agricultural Supplies Committee, established under the War Measures Act, has investigated various price relationships. One phase of this work has led to a comprehensive study of long term relationships between prices of millfeeds and prices of livestock products with a view to estimating the fairness of present prices of bran, shorts and middlings in relation to prevailing prices of hogs and dairy products.

The price of millfeeds, as by-products of the flour-milling industry, might be expected to be determined largely by the prevailing price of wheat. While wheat prices are an important factor in determining the prices of these feeds, however, several other factors have proved in the past to be quite as important as, or even more important than, the price of wheat.

One of these factors is the monthly production of the individual feeds, since production determines the supply available for the market at any given time. The supply of home-grown feeds in relation to numbers of live stock on farms is another factor entering into the price of millfeeds because of the competition of these feeds with the milled products in the live stock ration. The prices farmers are receiving for animal products again become a factor, since it is with the returns from livestock sales that farmers are able to purchase supplies of feed; if these returns are low, farmers cannot pay high prices for additional supplies of purchased feeds. Exports, too, enter into the picture because of the opportunities which sellers have of disposing of their products on an outside market if such market are more favourable than the domestic market.

It is through the inter-connection of these and other factors that the final selling price of milled feeds is arrived at in the market.

The farmer's chief interest, however, is not so much that of price as that of price relationships. It is this latter factor that has been the main concern of the Committee in its study of millfeed prices as compared with prices of livestock products. The relationship of the price of any one product to the price of millfeeds may be calculated by seeing how many pounds of the feed is equivalent in price to a given amount of the animal product.

For example, in December, 1939, 100 pounds of live hog in Toronto was equivalent in price to 690 pounds of shorts. The average relationship between the prices of these commodities for the 10 years 1929 to 1938, the study shows, was 100 pounds of live hog in Toronto to 680 pounds of shorts. Hence, despite the rise in shorts prices during the late fall of 1939, the price in December was approximately at its average relationship with the price of hogs.

Similarly, in December, 1939, one pound of butterfat in Ontario was equivalent in price to 23.3 pounds of bran at Toronto, compared with an average of one pound butterfat to 21.2 pounds bran over the past ten years. Thus the price of butterfat was slightly above its long-time relationship with the price of bran. While the price relationships early in 1939 were less favourable to the dairymen than to the hog producers, study shows, this situation has been corrected by the recent rise in butterfat prices.

It should be added that the Agricultural Supplies Committee is continuing to keep in close touch with the situation, with a view to seeing that the farm buyer is not placed at a disadvantage in the market.

CBC War Song has Its Premier

Jess Jaffray, Toronto CBC baritone, who is to sing the new song "Over Here for Over There", his world premiere on the CBC House of Variety programme, Friday, January 19, 9:00 p.m., has just returned from New York where he attended rehearsals of Paul Robeson's new stage show. Several CBC personalities have collaborated on the Canadian war song, which is specially arranged for this broadcast by Percy Faith. Jess showed his song to Robeson, who predicted that it would be a hit.

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URGES FARMERS TO PRACTICE SCIENCE

Taking the 100-year old motto of the Royal Agricultural Society of England "Practice with Science" as the subject of his recent address to the British Association, Sir Thomas Middleton, a leading British agriculturist, pointed out that during the decade 1831-1840 the land of Great Britain maintained a population of about 17 millions; it now provides food for about 14 millions, and this although farmers of today have available, as their predecessors had not, artificial manures, first-rate implements, improved varieties of crops and all the assistance which a century of scientific study has given to agriculture.

Although it was an easy thing to criticize much of the farming one sees today in Great Britain, said Sir Thomas, it was not so easy to do so in a way that would be of service to the occupant of the farm. All who are in contact with the industry know that in the post-war period rising costs and uncertain prices have so crippled the resources of the farmer that he is quite unable to bestow on his land the same careful treatment that it got from his forefathers; and no one regrets its condition more than does the farmer himself. In the preparations for defence, the position of agriculture is a large one, but its place is not quite what it should be rendered in connection with defence that farmers can legitimately ask the nation to pay, as it is paying and paying heavily, for the services of others similarly engaged.

Looking to the future, the old motto "Practice with Science" is still applicable. The nation which relied on British farmer for its food supply in

1839 cannot do without his aid in 1939, while the farmer himself, if he is to do his part, as his forefathers did, must take as his watchword "Practice with Science."

CULLING OF POULTRY

By the term "culling" inference is made to selection for the production of eggs. Culling should never cease but should be practiced throughout the entire laying year. Poor layers do not pay for their board. While the pullets for laying should be selected at the time they are moved to their laying quarters a thorough culling ought to take place again some weeks later and the action of every bird noticed carefully thereafter.

In a group of birds hatched at the same time and given the same care the best layers are usually those that mature earliest and, consideration should be given to that fact at the outset when selecting the birds for the laying house.

Certain standard methods of selecting good laying hens have been developed. Among the main qualities, which are definitely established as being necessary for high egg production, are: large capacity and vigour; particularly important—plenty of room for a large, fully developed digestive and reproductive system is essential, observes K. McBean, Officer-in-Charge, Dominion Experimental Sub-Station, Smithers, B.C.

A heavy egg producer must be vigorous. She must be a hearty eater. Great activity at feeding time and promptness to get off the roost in the morning are characteristics of vigorous birds. The general condition of the bird, symmetry and balance, strength of beak and head with bright, bustling, alert eyes, are the best indicators of vigour and vitality.

When sizing up the capacity of a hen her laying condition will very naturally be observed at the same time. The abdomen of the good layer is soft and pliable when she is in good condition and laying heavily. Poor layers that use feed for storing up fat rather than for egg production will generally have a hard, lumpy abdomen.

In a flock of naturally yellow-shanked and yellow-skinned birds, such as the Barred Plymouth Rock, the breed represented at the Experimental Sub-Station, Smithers, B.C., the birds usually have a considerable amount of pigmented body fat stored in the skin, shanks and other sections of the body. During a period of heavy laying there is a tendency to draw on this reserve fat supply for egg-making material. The yellow colour disappears with the fat and the shank and skin becoming much lighter in colour. After several months of heavy laying the better layers may thus be selected while the poor layers will always have a considerable amount of the yellow pigment in the shanks and skin.

With reference to moulting the best birds usually lay persistently and moult quickly, and those which moult early and slowly are of inferior quality.

To ensure the best of the desirable characteristics of a good layer, she should be culled for the breed late in the laying year, if a yellow-shanked bird, or if a yellow-shanked bird after several months of laying.

While a flock can be culled by means of physical characteristics mentioned above the use of the trapnet is, after all, the only way to get positive evidence of egg-laying ability or lack of it.

Form should be supplied with the addition of about one per cent of edible bone meal or bone char to the grain mixture. A few roots, carrots, mangels or turnips will add variety and give succulence to the winter ration. Regular exercise is almost as important as good feed in the development of the foal. Daily exercise should be planned. It will help to develop bone and muscle and keep the foal's legs in good condition. The foal's feet should not be neglected. Their development should be watched

PRODUCE QUALITY CHICKS CHEAPLY

Although the largest proportion of chicks produced today is hatched in mammoth incubators, there is still a great number of farmers and private breeders operating small units. For those who desire to use the small incubators, the Dominion Department of Agriculture has issued a re-vised circular on "Artificial Incubation" to enable the production of high quality chicks at lowest possible cost.

In choosing an incubator, the size and type of machine required will depend on several factors, such as the number of chicks to be hatched at one time, the length of the hatching season, the number of hatches than can be taken off successfully, the size of the breeding units, and the type of fuel to be used, whether electricity, coal, or coal oil. In short, the choice will depend upon the individual requirements of the poultryman concerned.

The circular deals in detail with everything important that should be known—the location of the incubator, the kind of incubator, how to operate it, temperature, humidity, turning the egg, testing, taking off the hatch, incubation of eggs of other species, source of eggs for hatching, holding eggs for incubation, and other information. The circular may be obtained free of charge on request from the Publicity and Extension Division, Dominion Department of Agriculture, Ottawa.

The King's Advice

The following article, from the pen of Wallace Havelock Robb, is taken from "The Canadian Countryman," appealed so strong to us that we reproduce it here:—

It amused me greatly to note the confusion of the literary high-brows over the quotation used by His Majesty the King in his address. Here is what His Majesty quoted:

"I said to a man who stood at the gate of the year, 'Give me light that I may tread safely into the unknown,' and he replied, 'Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God. That shall be to you better than light and safer than any known way.'"

This morning, as I write, the day after Boxing Day, the news reporter on the radio stated that the author of these lines has been found. He gave her name for it was "her," not a "his" and I didn't catch it, but it will be in the new papers of the day, and I shall make note of it. In any case, it turns out to be a school teacher of mid-England, and she wrote these lines about twenty years ago, and they were published in a little volume of her poetry. So, there you have it. A poet! And though she was not known outside her own little locality, and though she had to have her precious verses privately printed, probably because nobody took any notice of her, that God in Whose hand she placed her own, and in Whose Almighty Love she undoubtedly placed her little book of poems—well, do you see the drift of what I am saying here? There came a day, a Christmas Day, when His Majesty King George VI wanted to say to his troubled peoples all over the world, something big, something lasting, something reassuring and comforting, something so simple and true that nobody could fail to get the message, yet something strong in faith and leadership—yes, something of personal faith as well as of national power. And that was a large and important part of it. A most difficult thing to do, to say so much in so few words. And when that time came, and His Majesty spoke, it was not words supplied by the Poet Laureate which carried the load, it was these words, this guiding thought, of an obscure and little known poet. And as to how they reached the King and impressed His Majesty—well, that "lies in the thought itself."

And, now, as to the underlying depth of meaning of these words, that is for every human soul to work out in his or her own life. As for myself, already I have resolved to have more confidence in my own obscure poetry, and I think each and every leader and teacher and poet and preacher should take heart from this grand gesture of the King. If I were the Reeve of my township, Pittsburg in Frontenac County, I should be very proud indeed, or were I a Councillor. That's the whole point of the thing. I'm going to go about my work in 1940 along this thought which King George has given us. Who knows where our sincere efforts may lead us, or where our honest thoughts may find their mark? Take the local newspaper, for instance, sometimes we feel that it isn't as good as the big city journal, but I've noticed over a period of years, and especially the last few years, that the local papers are, in my opinion, I'm going to be prouder than ever of the newspaper in my own locality. I'm going to feel that the obscure and unknown lad with a bull calf in the local fair may land, one day, in the cattle stalls of His Majesty the King. I'm going to believe, honestly and deep down within me, that my neighbors are as good as any on earth, and can produce as good grain or live stock as anyone anywhere! We've got to get over this idea that big publicity, big noise and big money have a monopoly on wisdom and leadership and happiness. I'm grateful to His Majesty the King for showing us all, in this impressive way, that the smallest among us may turn out to be the chosen one. Let us all take our King's advice; be it a pitch-fork or a poem, we'll build locally, honestly, proudly.

KEEP PRODUCTION COST HOGS DOWN

The importance of keeping the cost of producing hogs as low as possible was stressed by A. W. Peterson, Chief Live Stock and Poultry Production Services, Dominion Department of Agriculture, in a recent address to the Eastern Ontario Yorkshire Breeders' Association.

The Canadian Government has now made a definite undertaking to provide regular weekly shipments up to 5,000,000 pounds of bacon and other pork products to Great Britain at an assured price. Mr. Peterson pointed out that the cost of production might be a factor determining whether Canadian hog producers can continue to supply the United Kingdom with bacon. At the same time it is necessary to continue improving quality in hogs and in bacon.

Mr. Peterson compared the present situation in the Canadian hog industry with conditions at the outbreak of the war of 1914-18. At that time food prices advanced sharply but hog prices did not. The relationship between the price of feed and the price of hogs was not favourable to swine production. During the period of the last war Great Britain doubled her imports of bacon. While exports from Canada were increased, this export did not come about entirely through an increase in Canadian swine production. It was done partly through imports of bacon from the United States. Although Great Britain doubled imports of bacon in the last war it does not necessarily follow that this will happen in the present situation.

WINTER CARE OF FOALS

The future value of the foal depends largely on the care given during the winter months, states J. G. Stothart, Animal Husbandry Division, Central Experimental Farm, Ottawa. A little extra attention will mean additional dollars or power when the foal is mature.

Bone and muscle building feeds are necessary for proper development. The foal will not grow properly on a ration of hay alone. Crushed or rolled oats with a small proportion of alfalfa and a good quality mixed hay form an ideal growing ration. A Saturday night bran mash with a teaspoonful of saltpetre added is a good regulator.

Salt is essential and minerals may be helpful. Block salt in the iodized

GERMAN BOMBER SHOT DOWN IN FRANCE



British and French Air Forces on the Western Front, working in close co-operation, are carrying out magnificent work. In this photograph the fuselage of a big German plane is seen being towed through the streets of a French town, a trophy which will afford much valuable information to the Allies.

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and they should be trimmed when necessary. If the foal is treated kindly, is broken early to the halter and its confidence gained, the owner will be repaid with a thrifty, steady working horse.