Profitable Beef Production

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FAT MEANS FLAVOR AND FAVOR.

Cattle are fattened not only to increase their weight but to improve the quality of the meat as well. A carcass with plenty of fat evenly distributed through it is sure to command a well deserved premium on the market.

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Where can beef be raised? In the past beef production has been profitable to a large extent only on cheap land where grazing was practised. The cattle were grass-fattened and shipped to market, where some of the best were kept for slaughter, and the thinner animals or the “feeders” were reshipped to the country for grain feeding.

Wisconsin farmers found the finishing of carload lots profitable so long as there was a wide margin (the difference between the buying and selling price). Recently, however, the western ranges have been cut up, the cost of production has increased, and the supply of beef cut down with a consequent rise in price. In turn feeders have increased in price to such an extent that beef men are being forced to produce their animals at home, or go out of the business. Beef production is now a paying proposition on $200 an acre land.

Is Wisconsin suited for beef production? Wisconsin is naturally suited for beef production. Southern Wisconsin pastures are equal to those of the blue grass section of Kentucky. Upper Wisconsin is the clover land of America, and includes a vast amount of choice grazing land. This state is famed for its abundance of pure water. Corn for silage (the beef-man’s salvation) and for other feeding purposes matures in nearly all sections of the state, and yields profitably. Clover hay, the choicest roughage for fattening cattle, can be raised throughout the state. Certain of the root crops nearly equal to corn silage in feeding value, and scarcely excelled as a succulence can be profitably grown throughout the northern section of the state. Four of the chief live stock markets are located at our very doors.

What are the advantages of raising beef? Beef farming requires little labor, needs little or no expensive equipment, is the best means of using large areas of untillable land, and returns to the soil practically all of the fertilizing value of the feeds used.

What are the beef breeds? The beef breeds are Shorthorn, Hereford, Aberdeen Angus, and Galloway. The Red Poll is the leading dual purpose breed. Which one to choose will depend upon personal choice and local conditions. As the Herefords and Shorthorns are recognized as the best grazers many Wisconsin farmers likely will prefer one of these breeds.

What is a good beef type? In general a good beef animal is blocky in form. A short broad head (all that the experienced feeder needs to see in order to pick out a good feeder) a short thick neck coupled to a short, broad, deep, low set body, with a straight underline. The butcher wants an animal that will furnish the largest percentage of choice cuts with the least waste. Hence, he wants a short, broad back, with a wide thick loin, broad thick thighs, and a deep full twist. Excess offal (bone, horns, hide, paunch, etc.) is objectionable from his standpoint. The feeder will want the same type, but with a large heart
girth,—insuring a strong constitution, thus showing the ability to stand up in the feed lot, and a large "middle" showing capacity for consuming feed.

**How can beef cattle of the right type be secured for feeding purposes?** The most common way has been to buy feeders on the market. This is rapidly being replaced by home breeding of cattle. Good beef cattle can only be produced by the continued use on well bred beef cows, of carefully selected pure bred bulls.

**What are the market classes of stock?** In order to market cattle wisely it is necessary to know into what class and grade they will go, when they reach the markets. Class refers to the use to which an animal is put, grade is the degree of fitness for that class. The principal market classes are: beef cattle, butcher cattle, stockers and feeders, cutters and canners, baby beef, veal calves.

"Beef cattle" are the choicest animals put on the market. "Butcher cattle" are not in condition for the beef cattle class, and lack the qualities which make good "feeders"—as feeders are classified cows, heifers, bulls and steers of poor breeding and quality. Stockers and feeders are the cattle which are returned to the country for feeding purposes.

Cutters and canners consist of cattle which are very thin in flesh, and are generally old cows which are not desirable for feeding. Cutters are somewhat better than canners, which are the poorest stock on the market.

Veal calves are from four to eight weeks old, and intended for slaughter purposes.

"Baby beef" applies to young, well bred, well fattened stock, which is marketed at from twelve to eighteen months of age, at a weight of from 800 to 1,000 pounds. It is called "baby beef" because it has been pushed right along from the start, and has not been allowed to lose the calf fat.

**How is baby beef made?** Only low down, well bred, early maturing, high quality calves make baby beef. These can only be secured by using pure bred bulls on carefully selected cows. Baby beef production, the most profitable form of beef farming, means good blood and high feeding. The calf is well fed to the time of marketing. The advantages of
baby beef production are: it eliminates the "gambles", is a cash crop
insuring quick returns, less capital is required, and makes use of the
home grown feeds for fattening, and increases the capacity of pastures
for carrying breeding stock.

**How to feed baby beef.** Get the calves to eating cracked corn and
bran as soon as possible, gradually changing to shelled corn and cotton-
seed meal, making the ration nine parts corn and one part cotton-seed
meal. Watch your calves and do not overfeed. Alfalfa and clover hay
are the best roughages. Corn silage is indispensable as it furnishes
summer succulence throughout the winter.

**Why fatten cattle?** Cattle are fattened to increase the live weight,
and improve the condition of meat by depositing fat in the tissues,
which process is known as "marbling". Finished animals command a
premium on the market.

**What kind of cattle should be fed?** Only animals which will make
economical and profitable gains should be selected for feeding purposes.
This will include well bred steers and heifers from one to three years
old, which are not in fit condition for slaughter.

**Where can feeder cattle be secured?** Feeder cattle can be secured
on any of the live stock markets. When buying either select the cattle
personally, or deal with some reliable commission house.

**When to buy.** The best time to buy is in the fall for at this season
there is less demand for feeder stock.

**How shall they be fed?** This problem will have to be solved by
the individual. The concentrates commonly used are corn and cotton-
seed meal. Clover and alfalfa hay are the best roughages. Silage is
the beef man's salvation for fattening market stock, and to aid him
in wintering his breeding cows.

**When to market.** Study market conditions carefully, shipping to a
rising market whenever possible. The best prices for heavy beef are
secured just before Christmas, but baby beef sells well at all times.

**What to consider before going into the beef business.** Remember
that it is not a get-rich-quick scheme, but that the successful man is
the one who goes into it in a businesslike way, starts in slowly, studies
his cattle, and the markets, produces his own feeds so far as possible,
and learns all he can about feeding. He always keeps in mind the
fact that good beef animals are born and then made. Poor feeding and
management will make scrubs out of the best bred stock, and spell
ruin for the owner.