How to Produce Milk at a Profit.

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As far as I know there is no royal road to success in the dairy business. The milking machine is not yet in general use. In studying the cow census, taken in the several states we find in many instances the returns from the factory fall below the estimated cost of production. Something is wrong. Unless we, or dairymen, can market the products of our farms through our dairy cows, at the market price of these products, we had better quit the business.

We need to study all the details of the dairy carefully.

1st. We need a machine working for us, which will return the largest amount of milk and cheese for the food consumed.

We can buy a Deering binder or a McCormick mower with our eyes shut, and be reasonably sure that these machines will do as good work for us, as other machines of the same kind. With the dairy cow it is different. She may have the same form as her sister, she may have the same color and general appearance, but her ability to be an economical producer may be entirely lacking. This is an unseen power, and no man can judge the dairy cow accurately, only by the use of the scales and Babcock test.

Weigh the milk from each cow. If you do not care to weigh each day weigh one day in a week. At the end of the month make an average, and see how much she gave for that month. Continue this for the year and and it is an easy matter to know, just how much each cow has brought you. Sell all that have not made a profit. I said yearly records. There is no room in a profitable dairy for the cow that comes in in May or June and dries up when the flies begin to bite. The dairy cow to produce milk at a profit must give milk 9 or 10 months.

Three years ago I began weighing the milk from each cow. I found that a cow that freshened in Sept. or Oct. would give from 2 to 3 thousand pounds more milk in a year
than an equally good cow that freshened in April or May. Let me say these were the results from dry feeds. I never have used ensilage. It is no trouble to get an ordinary dairy cow to give from 6 to 8 thousand pounds of milk in a year with reasonable feed and care. I said “dairy cow.” There are many cows not worthy the name dairy cow.

How shall we get better cows?
1st. Use the best of dairy sires.
2nd. Save only heifer calves from the best cows.
3rd. Sell all that do not prove good milkers.

We may have the best of cows but if we do not feed and care for them wisely, we cannot expect a profit. The subject of feeds and feeding is the greatest subject before the American dairyman.

The cow need not be kept fat but she must be in a strong healthy condition all of the time. If she is to freshen while on dry feed she should be grained for two or three weeks previous. The feed at this time should consist of oats and bran, very little corn. If this feed is neglected no amount of after feeding will make her do her best for that season. As long as she is on dry feed it is safe to say she should have 1 lb. of mixed grain, consisting of bran, oats and corn, for every 3 lbs. of milk produced. In addition to the grain she must have a variety of good coarse fodder. All she will eat without unnecessary waste.

Variety amounts to a great deal. Beans are good but we do not want them three times a day, neither does a cow want hay, morning, noon and night. In the morning give her some nice bright corn fodder either cut or shredded. At noon some early cut oat straw. At night, mixed hay, mostly clover, cut early, before the stem becomes too woody and indigestible. Do not allow the cows to get any grass until they are able to get enough to keep them. They will loose their appetite for dry foods. Continue the grain for several days after they are out to pasture. Here she will be happy and give a large flow of milk until the hot July sun causes the pastures to become dry and barren. The flies come in swarms and poor bossy has to grab a mouthful here and there and spend nearly all the strength gained thereby in driving the little tormentors from her body. We must come
to her rescue with some kind of green food, in early variety of sweet corn or second crop clover.

From this time on until winter we can not depend on our pastures to provide suitable food to produce milk in paying quantities. Do not expect your cow to give milk on dry June grass. She will not do it.

Plow up a part of your pasture and raise large quantities of some variety of fodder corn.

With good cows, good feed, still you will not produce milk at a profit without giving the cow good care. She must have warm, well lighted, well ventilated barns. You can not turn a milch cow out of the warm barn at 8 o’clock every morning in winter and allow her to stand in the cold until 5 o’clock at night and expect her to give you from 30 to 40 lbs. of milk per day. She will not do it. She must be kept comfortable all of the time.

We are in the midst of a great Swiss cheese factory country. How to make the thousands and thousands of cows, whose milk is used during the summer months in the production of Swiss cheese, to bring greater profits to their owners in the problem before us. I will say, have these cows come in 1st of January. Sell the veal calf when the prices is almost double what it will be in May or June.

Have separators, either on the farm or establish skimming stations at your cheese factories, (I am not agent for Gasoline engine or separator Co.) Sell the cream to some butter factory for manufacture. Butter is usually high this time of year. The fresh skim milk is worth 15c per hundred to feed on the farm.

In the 4 months, Jan. Feb. March and April these cows should give, beside veiling their calves 2,500 lbs. of milk. This is a low estimate. This milk should make 4 lbs. of butter to the hundred, or 100 lbs. of butter. This should net you 20c per lb. or $20.

These cows will go onto grass the 1st of May and give nearly as much milk as a fresh cow, and I believe just as good milk for the manufacture of swiss cheese.

What have we to the cow’s credit.

Veal calf 125 lbs. at 7c ........................................ $  8.75
100 lbs. butter at 20c .......................................... 20.00
Value of skim milk........................................... 3.75
4000 lbs. milk for Swiss cheese at 85c.................. 34.00

Total.............................................................. 66.50

Subtract from this the cost of grain.
20 days before calving at 5c................................ $ 1.00
120 days to the 1st of May at 8c............................. 9.60

Total grain...................................................... 10.60

$66.50—$10.60—$55.90. Figure for yourself the cost of
roughage. If these methods are followed I am sure we can
produce milk at a profit.