The Thoroughbred Dairyman.

It takes the thoroughbred dairyman to produce a good herd of dairy cows. This is because there is no rule that may be laid down by which the work of dairy herd producing may be unerringly accomplished. The work is not one that may be cut out by machinery after some particular pattern, but, to use a common phrase, we must "cut and fit." The whole thing comes back to the quality of the man that does the "cutting and fitting."

We have had a very small number of thoroughbred dairymen in the past, and that is why we have so few really good dairy herds. Fortunately the state dairy schools and the progressive dairymen in all the states are now laboring to produce a large number of thoroughbred dairymen and we have reason to hope that in the future the tribe will not be so small as it has been in the past.

The thoroughbred dairyman is always trying to educate himself in dairy knowledge. He finds this a hard task with the present sources of information; for the information itself is but just being accumulated. Much he learned yesterday he is compelled to let go of to-day, and some part of what he learns to-day will have to be discarded to-morrow. But the thoroughbred is not discouraged by this state of things. He is not only not satisfied with the amount of information that he can get from others but he sets to work to do some experimenting on his own behalf. He finds enough to keep him busy in trying to solve the problems that are yet unsolved or that have been solved in a very imperfect manner. This kind of dairyman is making his impress on the country because he is a worker and knows how to intelligently direct his operations, whether they relate to the work of his dairy or to the experiments he is conducting.

The thoroughbred dairyman learned long ago to control his temper and to be gentle with his dairy animals. He also insists on the other men having the care of the cows being gentle. He has learned perhaps by instinct that a rough manner or a boisterous voice does not increase the milk flow or the production of cream. Gentleness is one of the things that marks him as distinct from most of his fellows.

Milking Machines.

Of the various makes of milking machines that are being sold on the market the Thistle seems to stand at the head, though it has few friends in the United States. We hear from it however from time to time in England, Germany and Australia. In those countries it is being tested quite extensively, with varying results so far as making itself friends and enemies. In recent tests in Germany it has been used continually for a year or two but the cows where it is used are not kept for milking purposes beyond a year and a half. Then they are sold to the butchers and new cows purchased. It has been asserted that the milking machines dry up the cows and reduce the length of the milking period. With cows that are only to be milked to the end of one milking period it is impossible to ascertain the truth of this. A few cows purchased would not allow themselves to be milked by the machine. Some of the hard-milking cows had to be stripped by hand after the machine had done what it could, but the easy-milking cows were milked clean by it. It seems to be evident that if we are to have milking machines we will have to develop a special class of cows with teats of a certain conformation and with milk ducts that easily and quickly give down the milk.

As a general thing the grape vineyard should be given clean cultivation every year.

Fattening Sheep for Profit.

Where possible the farmer should fatten his own sheep. Recently we heard about a community of farmers where a great many sheep had been raised but had been sold to men that made a business of fattening and fitting sheep for market. The men that did the finishing in this case took their sheep only a few miles away and began the work of putting on flesh and fat. They came back from time to time to buy the clover and corn fodder of the farmers and even the grains they had raised. But principally they purchased the rough feed that every farmer had in abundance. The finishers made money out of their enterprise. The question naturally comes, why didn't the farmers themselves have the enterprise to keep the rough feed at home and not let go of the animals to consume it. They would then have retained on their farms the manure that was lost to them. In some cases the farmers in the locality mentioned hauled hay and other roughage fifteen miles to sell to the men doing the feeding. It looks very much as if some of our farmers have not figured the different operations down close enough to know what will prove profitable and what will not. We need the work of the pencil more in the problems of the farm. Because a certain method of doing has become the vogue is not a proof that it is the right thing to do or that it is the profitable thing. Ultimately it will be found that it pays the farmer to follow all the operations of sheep breeding, feeding, including finishing on his own farm.

The Clean Stall.

It is a useless piece of advice perhaps to say "keep the horse stall clean." Yet we have seen horse stalls that were always dirty. Moreover we have seen white and gray horses kept in such stalls. When they came out of them in the morning it was a good task to get the dirt and stain off them. They were unsightly in spite of all the washing that could be done. A good many farmers are too much afraid of wasting bedding. Sometimes too they shake out and save not only the dry straw but also much of the wet straw. The horse is not a dirty animal and there is little use in letting him get dirty. If the stall is kept clean work will be saved.

France and Horsebreeding.

The French government has for a long time done much to encourage horsebreeding, and the result is now seen in the number of good horses in that country and in the high-priced horses she is constantly sending to other countries. There has been a vigorous attempt there to reduce horse breeding to a science. Legislation and government money have been freely applied in the direction of safeguarding the breeding of horses. The government stallions have been of course the great factor in this forward movement. The French horsemen say that this expenditure of money and effort has paid well.

The Goat and Disease.

One thing in favor of the goat is that it is little subject to disease. Whether this is true of all of our common diseases we do not know. Doubtless the goat is subject to some disease. At least it is asserted that the goat does not have tuberculosis. If this is so it is a strong factor in its favor. Its milk should, in that case, be used more and more, and new and better breeds of milk goats should be developed. We are supposed to have about two million goats in this country. A physician says that we should have twenty millions just to supply milk for the babies of the country.

Geese.

In common geese the males and females differ in plumage, but this is not the case with the pure-bred geese. In their case the males and females are alike. The largest geese are the Toulouse, and these are popular with men that have a fancy for large fowls. If a man wants layers, however, he will choose the China. Those that raise the geese largely for feathers will choose the Embden, because their feathers are pure white, and hence the market value of them is greater than with those geese whose feathers are multi-colored. If a man merely wants to produce birds that can be marketed to good advantage he will find a cross of the Toulouse with the Embden give good results.

Where geese have access to a pond or a river they will derive much of their subsistence from the water. The writer knew of a man that lived on the banks of a river and had a large flock of geese. Across the shallow river was a starch factory, and from this a large amount of soaked corn daily ran from the sluices into the river. The geese made their living off this corn, which they fished up out of the water. It made a perfect food so far as softness and digestibility were concerned. They balanced their ration with the semi-aquatic plants growing in the river and along its margin. There are many like situations where a flock of geese would save what would otherwise go to waste.

Shallow ponds in summer teem with fish, water beetles, worms and other forms of life. A flock of geese shows great enjoyment in hunting their own food in such places. Geese are also consumers of some of the bugs that disturb the peace of the farmer. One man told the writer how he used to use them for the destruction of potato bugs. The geese would travel down the rows, darting their heads now to this side and now to that. They consumed in the course of a day a very large number of bugs. The fault to be found with them was that they did not do their work perfectly, but left colonies of bugs here and there, which later had to be destroyed by other agencies.

The goose lays from twenty-five to fifty eggs and if she could be bred up to lay more would become more popular on the farm. Perhaps it is possible to ultimately develop geese to lay as many eggs as hens, but that result is a long way in the future at the present time.

Freshness of Eggs.

There are many old ways of testing the freshness of eggs. Some of them may be of little value. Here is one that is going the rounds, but for which we cannot vouch. It may be all right: Eggs are placed in a pan of water, giving each room enough so that its motions will not be interfered with by the others. The air in the egg will be governed according to the age of the egg, if the egg has been kept in a moderately warm state. If the eggs are just laid they will be motionless. If they are more than a week old they will partly stand on the little end. This is because the air chamber is in the other end of the egg. This air chamber grows larger as the egg becomes older and the moisture in it evaporates. When the eggs get still older they will stand up straight in the water and when very old will float.

This test of course would be of no value in the case of pickled eggs or of eggs kept in cold storage where the temperature was so low that the evaporation of moisture from the eggs would be very small.

A good bone mill will pay its cost many times over in the course of a year, with a fair-sized flock.

The Prairie Dog Nuisance.

Prairie dogs have been declared to be a nuisance by the laws of Nebraska and other states. The Nebraska law goes so far as to declare that any one having land infested by prairie dogs and not getting rid of them is maintaining a nuisance. The harborer of these animals is made liable for damages committed on other land. Highway commissioners are instructed to see that the law is enforced. In the discharge of his duty connected with the extermination of prairie dogs the commissioner is allowed $3.00 per day and expenses and instructed to add the amount to the taxes of the land where the work of exterminating prairie dogs is done.

This makes it necessary for the owner of land to be vigilant in the extermination of the nuisance. The quickest and cheapest way to get rid of the dogs is to poison them, and this is generally resorted to. In making up the poison three ounces of strychnine and half a pound of potassium cyanide are put into one quart of boiling water. To this two quarts of molasses and a teaspoonful of oil of anise are added. Then a bushel of wheat is placed in a tight receptacle and the mixture is poured over it. It is then stirred, while four pounds of finely ground corn meal is poured into it. The molasses makes the liquid adhesive, so it will stick to the grains of wheat. The object of using the corn meal is to absorb the superfluous liquid or syrup and thus enable the grains of wheat to carry a larger amount of the poison. This poisoned grain is sown about the places inabited by the dogs. They eat it and die in large numbers.

There is, however, a decided sentiment against the use of the poison. Ranchmen and farmers hate to handle it and birds are frequently poisoned as well as the dogs. There is also some danger to live stock and children.

Carbon bisulphide has been used for many years in the extermination of burrowing animals. It is costly, but it is effective and is still being quite generally employed. It has the advantage of reaching all of the animals; for there are always some prairie dogs that will not eat the poisoned grain. The chemical mentioned is put into the burrows and changes to a gas that kills the animals.

The damage done by insects in the orchard can never be figured out, for the reason that we are many times unable to tell just what it is that killed a tree. That the damage from borers, caterpillars and other insects is very large there is no doubt. Likewise the man that wages successful war on borers and their allies can never know how much damage to his orchard he has prevented.

Farm buildings should be given a "going over" before the cold of the winter comes. Too many cracks in the barn may give abundant ventilation, but they give more—too many drafts. Ventilation is health, but drafts are the opposite. It does not cost much to stop up cracks, and if one kind of material cannot be secured for this work another can.

There are now innumerable varieties of potatoes and they are increasing in number every year. Withal, there is an improvement, but it is difficult to say how long this improvement will go on.

If potatoes are planted on land containing much humus there will be little occasion for the application of nitrogen. This is why new land is frequently very good for potatoes.

The dairy icehouse should have a good foundation and good drainage.