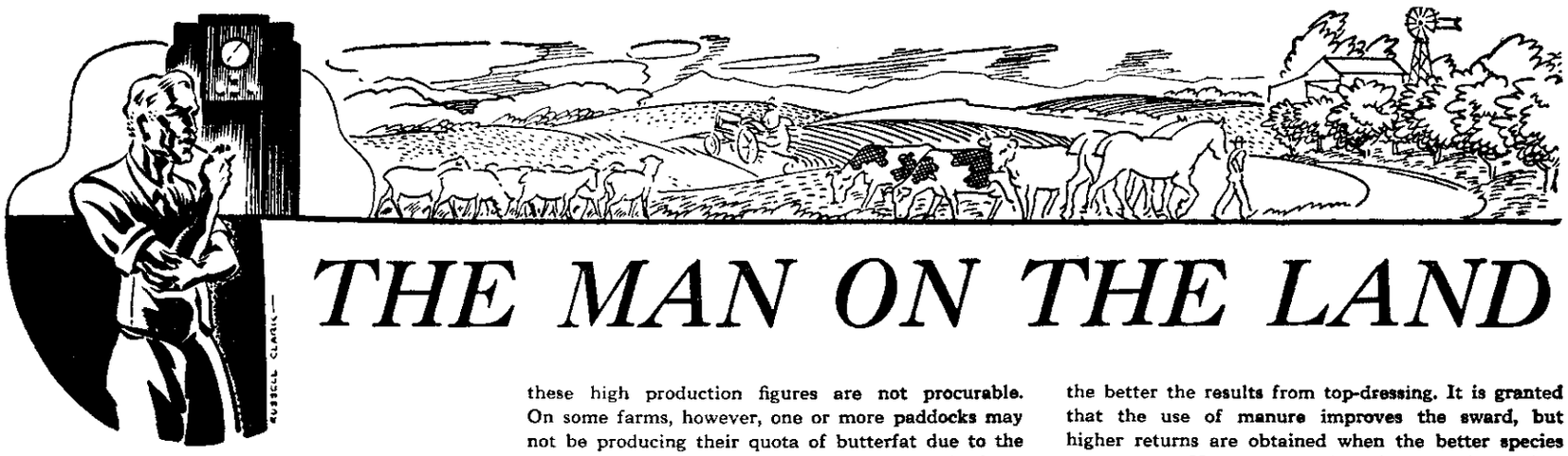


THE MAN ON THE LAND

Take a Note of These Talks:

1YA: *Selection and Preparation of Areas for Cropping in Dairy Farming, from the Fields Division, Monday, August 28, 7.30 p.m.; and the Young Farmers' Club session. 7.40 p.m.*

2YC: *Milking Shed Equipment and Practice, from Department of Agriculture, Tuesday, August 29. 7.30 p.m.*

3YA: *Brooding of Chicks, under the auspices of the New Zealand Utility Poultry Club, by J. Liggins, Tuesday, August 29. 7.35 p.m.*

4YZ: *Preparing for the Dairy Season, by G. R. Herron, Tuesday, August 29. 8 p.m.*

We drew attention last week to the interesting task assigned to the Young Farmers' Club of Karawaka, North Canterbury, viz., to inquire into and report on the management of the high-production dairy farms in their territory. The result of their inquiries was broadcast from 2YA, Wellington, a fortnight ago, and is now summarised in print for the benefit of those who cannot listen in to 2YA.

How To Break Production Records

WE were fortunate in having this subject allotted to us, for in our district is one of the highest butterfat producing farms on a per acre basis. The farm lately owned by J. N. Blyde has produced 360 lbs. of butterfat per acre under his management. This farm will be used as the main source of our information.

Consolidation Necessary

From our observations we have concluded that it is necessary to have land either flat or easy undulating so that the greatest use may be made of the consolidating effect of concentrated stocking. Without proper consolidation the better grasses and clovers fail to become properly established with a consequent lower ability to produce. Evidence of the effect of consolidation by stock is provided by the solid sward of ryegrass to be found in pig paddocks, around gateways, and along fence lines.

Land with a north-easterly aspect receives more sunshine than that differently situated, and consequently has a longer growing period, as the temperature of the soil plays an important part in the growth of grass, especially during the late autumn and early spring, when the value of grass is at a premium.

Best Strains Must Be Present

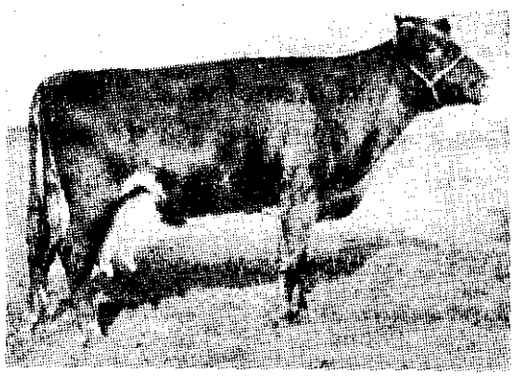
Pasture management on a high production dairy farm must, of necessity, be confined to the better strains and types of grasses and clovers, for without these high production figures are not procurable. On some farms, however, one or more paddocks may not be producing their quota of butterfat due to the presence of inferior grasses. Where these make large areas, drastic harrowing and surface sowing has much to commend it as better species are being introduced, since the paddock is out of production for a very short period, and the necessary consolidation is retained. Certified strains are of course necessary, and the following mixture has given good results:—

Certified Perennial Ryegrass	*20 lbs.*
Crested Dogstail	*3 lbs.*
Certified White Clover	*3 lbs.*

But where poor swards are ploughed and re-grassed, the best results are obtained.

Electric Fence

It is here that the use of an electric fence has much in its favour. On one of the high producing farms in this district the owner ploughs a portion of a paddock, crops it for one year and then sows down to a temporary pasture of Italian Ryegrass and Red Clover. Next year another part of the paddock is similarly treated, until the whole area has been ploughed and cropped. The temporary subdivision fences are then removed and the whole paddock is re-grassed with a mixture of permanent grasses.



SHORTHORN "CHERRY," the first cow in the world to yield 4,000 gallons of milk in one year.

On our many visits to farms we have noticed the poor weedy swards obtained where the land has been cropped for several years. Continual cropping allows weeds to multiply, and when it is thought that a payable crop cannot be obtained on account of these weeds the area is sown down in pasture—the most important crop of all. This is looking for trouble.

Top-Dressing

We have stressed the importance of good types of grasses and clovers in the sward before mentioning top-dressing, as we consider that the better the sward the better the results from top-dressing. It is granted that the use of manure improves the sward, but higher returns are obtained when the better species are present. Hence our choice of order of mention.

Controversy still exists about the phosphatic manures to use, both slag and super having their supporters, but all are united in the opinion that potash is necessary to high production in North Taranaki. Although, too, the top-dressing programme of the owner of the high producing pastures varies, all are convinced of the necessity of top-dressing twice a year.

The use of liquid manure or shed washings should not be neglected. Besides obviating the cash outlay for the artificial manure, this type of top-dressing builds up the fertility of the paddock and produces a sward of out-of-season high producing grass and clover. But the stock droppings should not be allowed to collect at the shed until the weather has washed most of the plant food out of them. By providing a sump which is emptied regularly all the fertilising ingredients are retained, while the presence of the water used for washing down helps to carry the plant food directly to the grass roots with a consequent quicker result than when artificial manures are applied.

Rotational Grazing

Although the growing of high producing strains of grasses and clovers is necessary, the proper utilisation of the grown material is a more important factor to high production. To this end rotational grazing is imperative. The stock should be allowed a fresh paddock each day, but when it is found that they cannot cope with the feed grown, some should be shut for hay or ensilage. By this method the harvesting may also be rotated, to the benefit of the pastures, as the continual harvesting of the same field usually causes rapid deterioration of the sward.

SUMMARY

Pasture management on a high production dairy farm may be summarised as follows:—

1. Choose flat to easy undulating land with a north-easterly aspect.
2. Subdivide it with adequate shelter.
3. Cultivate only the high producing strains of grasses and clovers.
4. Top-dress twice a year with liberal quantities.
5. Apply lime periodically.
6. Practise rotational grazing.
7. Reserve different fields each year for harvesting.
8. Provide an adequate supply of winter feed.
9. Ensure a water supply in each paddock.
10. Utilise every blade of grass to the best advantage.