

LIVESTOCK JUDGING: CAMPAIGN TO RAISE STANDARDS

Can you judge livestock? If you can, have you ever won a judging competition? Or do you surrender weakly to the idea that judges are born and not made? If you are as weak as that, you will have the Young Farmers' Clubs after you. They definitely believe, and very emphatically say, that "points" can be taught, and they are starting on a campaign to teach them.

Here are some of their arguments as presented for them last month by C. J. Hamblyn, Fields Superintendent, Palmerston North, in a broadcast from 2YA. Read them carefully, and ask yourself what you think of them as you visit your local Show.

ONE of the first essentials in getting together and maintaining a good herd or flock is an ability to select the right animals. That this ability can be acquired by quite young people has been clearly demonstrated for many years by the skill in judging livestock shown by Young Farmers' Club members in other countries. The remarkable improvement made by young farmers when instructed by competent men in the art of selecting and judging all types of livestock has certainly upset the theories that good judges are born, not made, or that good judgment can result only from long years of experience with a particular type of livestock.

Natural and Acquired Ability

Natural ability does count, but considerable further ability can be acquired. Experience and knowledge gained by breeding and handling stock for many years is also extremely valuable; but a sound basis for selection and judgment obtained while young can

make this experience considerably more valuable.

Livestock judging competitions aim to give this sound basis for judgment and selection. Hitherto our judges and demonstrators of livestock have graduated through the school of experience. They have been successful breeders of livestock before becoming recognised judges. From this fact two important questions arise in considering the value of livestock judging competitions as a means of improving the knowledge and ability of young farmers to correctly judge and select stock. Firstly, can sound judgment and ability to select good animals be learnt from competent judges, through demonstrations and discussions, plus practice? Secondly, if sound judgment can be acquired will it improve the ability of the young farmer as a breeder?

Raising the Average of Knowledge

In the promotion and running of livestock judging competitions the main aim is the raising of the average standard of knowledge of livestock amongst the young farmers generally. To achieve this aim it is essential that the judging competitions should be looked on as the incentive for young farmers to become more competent. The actual competitions should be a test of skill already acquired, rather than an opportunity to learn—except perhaps in the finer points.

Where the Learning is Done

If the competitions are to be the incentive to learn judging it is natural to ask where the learning is done. The running of a successful club stock judging competition each year should be the final event of a season of demonstrations, discussions and trials in

which club members have had the guidance and instruction of the best livestock judges available in the district. The actual club competition then becomes a test of acquired skill. The demonstrations by the judges at the competitions are, of course, a further important feature of the learning process.

Having won a club competition, a club member has the honour of representing the club at the district competition, where from eight to twenty clubs will compete. As a representative of his club he will endeavour to increase his knowledge and ability and every breeder and stock judge in his district will be interested in his progress.

Team Coaches?

Though it is not likely and probably not desirable that the development of team coaches will be taken up in New Zealand as it has been apparently in other Empire countries, it is certain that district teams if selected early enough would have the practical support and advice of prominent breeders and judges to still further improve their prospects at Provincial or National competitions.

The Ideal Type

While organised demonstrations, discussions and coaching are some of the opportunities to learn, it is well to emphasise that the basis of all sound judgment is the ideal type. It is worth a good deal to any young judge to have opportunities of seeing and thoroughly studying animals that are close to perfect. It is worth much more to be able to get the perfect type defined and fixed in the eye so that all comparisons can be made with the ideal.

Take A Note Of These Talks

2YA: *Improvement of Second Class Hill Country, by a representative of the Wairoa Young Farmers' Club. Tuesday, November 28, at 7.40 p.m.*

4YZ: *The Budgetary System of Land Valuation, by J. J. Lynch. Tuesday, November 28, at 8 p.m.*

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