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ACROSS THE ISLAND

Inspection Cut Resented Here

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IT'S A long time since I have seen top potato men disturbed as much as they are by the drastic cut in the seed potato inspection staff here. It's a reduction that must be corrected, if the present program of potato quality improvement is to be maintained. It's simply impossible to carry on with top efficiency with the staff cut so sharply, several of those close to the industry told me yesterday.

It's most certainly out of step with the aggressive program of seed improvement this province has established this year under the direction of its potato marketing board.

One man said yesterday the entire inspection staff was not extensive enough to cope with the Fusarium (sp?) rot infection two years ago, so he asks how the government expects a little more than half of that number - 13 were released out of a total staff of 33 - to handle the situation efficiently now?

IT'S INEVITABLE that many of the actions taken under the austerity program will be unpopular, but this one seems to be completely inexcusable. It's one of the things that just has to be rectified.

I am told that inspectors in New Brunswick are all claimed as permanent employees, and therefore that province's potato industry will not be similarly affected. An effort has been going on to get our men put on a similar basis for some years, I am told - I recall some effort being made even when I was in Ottawa back in the middle fifties - but the effort has been unsuccessful.

Our people were told "what's the difference, your men are working full time anyway". But now the "difference" has suddenly become apparent.

New Haven Men Are Outstanding

I VISITED last week two New Haven farmers whose work with swine and cattle have brought them well-merited national recognition. John Colwill and son Stanley have achieved some outstanding records in their hog barn, and Waldren MacPhee, who lives about a mile up the road, won his place in the livestock world when his Dual Purpose Shorthorn herd topped Canada last year in the small herd class, nine to 15 milk cows.

Sows with slaughter test scores of 90 or more are no longer rare, but they are still comparatively few. But the Colwills have six in their barn that have furnished litters that have scored from 91 to 99 in this advance registry test, and that's most unusual.

I'm wondering if it has ever happened before. They have one 91, two 92's, one 93, one 96 and one 99. They have had at least 10 that have scored 90 or more since they

have started breeding the top notch stock, if we include the one they bred that scored 99 for Judson MacPhee for the highest in Canada back in 1960.

They have had two 91's and one 93 in the same litter.

THEIR 93 sow weaned two litters of 16 pigs in succession. They bought her from J. Heber MacPhail, Cornwall who had bought her from Fred Matheson, Forest Hill, and her first 16-litter was weaned in the MacPhail barn.

Large litters are no novelty in the Colwill hog barn. A litter of 18 was farrowed the morning of the day I visited the farm and they all looked healthy, though it is always a problem to raise more pigs than the mother has teets to feed them. This mother has 14 of the milk taps but some have as many as 16. The last three litters farrowed in the Colwill barn totaled 51 pigs. There were two litters of 18 pigs and the other with 15.

Consistent production of high quality stock has brought Mr. Colwill recognition across the country. He shipped these pigs to the Peace River area of Alberta last spring.

Breeding Standards Are High

MR. COLWILL said a sire he purchased from P. P. (name unclear) French River had given him his first real start along with the dam he bought from Sterling Willis, Cornwall. Another sire purchased from the late William Proud (?) Long River sired litters that scored 92, 95 and the 99, all of them completing their tests in 1961.

Some years ago swine breeders in this province entered into a gentlemen's agreement not to sell breeding stock from any dam that qualified in advanced registry with slaughter test scores of less than 85. Mr Colwill tells me that he is not selling pigs for breeding stock from dams with a score of less than 95.

Success Is Traced Back To Lilly

MR. MACPHEE was presented with the Sennper (?) Trophy early this year when his heard of nine milk cows averaged 8.194 pounds milk 124 fat (unclear) for the best performance of the breed in small herds in the nation. He's particularly proud because he has four 2-year-old heifers, and one 1-year-old along with his four mature cows. I find that the herd of Sterling Wood, Mt. Herbert was second in Canada in the same competition which gave the Island the top two placings.

The MacPhee success story is unusual in that it traces back to the purchase of a two-year-old heifer he had bought for beef. He expected to make a few dollars on "Lilly" by turning her over to the packers, but kept her when he found she was carrying a calf.

SINCE THEN Lilly has had some outstanding achievements to her credit, in addition to being the foundation cow for the herd that last year won national acclaim. Graded "Excellent" for conformation, she was twice grand champion at the Provincial Exhibition and qualified late last year in advanced registry.

This calls for a cow to produce at least 20,000 pounds milk 800 fat in two complete lactations, within 26 months. Lilly earned a gold seal on her certificate by qualifying with 21,882 milk, 854 fat in 21 months and four days.

Bought as a two-year-old in March 1953, the eleven year old Lilly produced 11,364 milk 453 fat for breed class averages of 351 on milk, 168 fat (unclear) last year and she

is now working on another test which her owner thinks will give her an even better record.

Gov't Brought In Hay For Feed

I'M INDEBTED TO Wallie Walker, Charlottetown and Tom Ledwell, St. Peters for the story that the government brought in hay for Island livestock in the winter of 1904-05 (unclear). Mr. Ledwell recalls "as though it were yesterday" that a load of hay was brought into Souris on the Stanley which was run up on the ice to half her length. Then the hay was thrown overboard on to the ice and was hauled ashore by horses. The government paid the freight, Mr. Ledwell recalls.

It followed a summer in which there was little hay, and scarcely any straw. The grain filled well but the straw was so short, it amounted to very little, and straw was being used for cattle food at that time.

THAT REMINDS me that the government brought in seed grain which it made available to farmers, on the condition they would return one and one-half bushels for every bushel they received. I'm wondering if some reader can tell me just when that was - my guess is the very early 1930s - and why the grain was so scarce here at the time that seed grain had to be brought in. I recall that we got some at our home and it was Leslie Weeks at Fredericton who handled it for our area.