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ACROSS THE ISLAND

Beef industry is discussed

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I DID a bit of checking this week on the grades of beef animals that are produced in the province and the results were interesting.

In 1959, for example, there were 106 red brand or choice animals, 559 blue brand or good. There were more than 9,700 C brand which includes roughly one-third standard brand and the remainder in the commercial brand. There were 3,339 plain steers and heifers and 4,181 cows along with a smaller quantity of bulls.

I TALKED with some agricultural men who quoted from official records and gave me some of their own reactions from their experience over the years.

There were several reactions. I was told the 3,339 "plains" were dairy steers or heifers that should have been vealed as calves. They should never have been raised at all, one man stated. "I am not saying that all dairy steers or heifers fall into this category. Some of them make good beef carcasses", he explained. But he was talking of a type of dairy calf that never does make beef.

"You can forget the cows because they are discards from the dairy herds that come as a by-product of selection and culling," he explained.

Dairy Economy Is Stressed

MY INFORMANTS raised serious doubts as to whether we should try for any marked increase in red or blue brand beef in the "dairy economy" that marks this province. They were satisfied that there has been a noticeable increase in the number of standard and commercial grades in recent years.

There was some question as to whether it would pay a farmer to produce red or blue brand carcasses when the price would amount to little more than ten dollars over a standard brand.

There is also the fact that the standard or commercial brand is more in demand in this province where most housewives feel that the top brand cuts carry too much fat even after the retailer has trimmed off some of the fat.

IT WAS explained that the carcass grader has to allow fifty percent for conformity and fifty percent for finish, so that feed alone is only half the battle.

Red and blue brand carcasses are much more popular in Western Canada and that is where most of them are produced. The average runs close to forty percent, it was stated.

Beef Cattle Production Hiked

BEEF CATTLE production has increased by forty percent in Canada in the last ten years, according to the Current Review of November 1960. The dairy population has fallen off slightly in the same time although the average dairy production has increased because of better breeding and better management.

BUT THE dairy cow is still the most highly rated animal in P.E.I.'s economy. The question these folk asked was how far can we go toward becoming a producer of top grade beef animals consistent with the fact that we depend mainly on dairy herds for farm income.

Time will answer this question and the developments of the next year or so will be interesting to watch.

Farm Meetings Are Planned

ISLAND SWINE breeders are meeting next week on annual session. Members are breeders of registered stock for the most part although Stewart Eagles, federal livestock fieldman, tells me that in future swine breeders with registered boars will be required to be members.

The meeting is scheduled for 1:30 in the afternoon in the National Film Board theatre in the Dominion Building. It means comfortable seats and pleasant surroundings which help to make a meeting more enjoyable. Those wooden or steel-chair seats can become awfully hard at times when the business drags on, so the deep cushions of the theatre seats will be appreciated.

THE APPROVED flock association people meet the same day at Birch Court so it's a fairly busy day for farm organizations.

Federal Minister Is Coming

THE BIG day for the agriculturists though, comes on January 23rd when Alvin Hamilton, federal minister of agriculture, comes here to help the federation of agriculture people celebrate their 20th anniversary. The story has been told already in our news columns and it's told anew in the federation news letter in the farm section today.

It doesn't seem like twenty years since the province's agricultural groups organized the federation but they observe 20 years of achievement later this month.