

NEW PLANT LOOMS WHEN 1,000 ACRES REACHED

Expansion of tobacco to 500 acres thought likely this year - MacRae



VAST POTATO FIELD UNDERLINES BASIC AGRICULTURAL NATURE OF ECONOMY

Fast beef development is evident in province

Prince Edward Island's cattlemen are rapidly improving and expanding their beef production, spurred on by the challenge of matching quality elsewhere, and the knowledge of a huge shortage in the Atlantic area.



The slightly less than five per cent of Red and Blue brand carcasses compares with almost 30 per cent across the country—22.5 per cent for Red and Blue, though Island producers are moving improvement and are going slightly less than 25 per cent in the Brown or Island brand. It represents an improvement that is encouraging Livestock Director L.W. Roper now with appreciation.

The challenge to produce a top quality product hits the Island beefmen hard as they strive to come close with their product where quality has trailed other provinces, to the "best in Canada" rating being by men here who last year achieved an unprecedented 53.2 per cent of grade A carcasses. No other province matches it and Canada average is 34.

100,000 GOAL The meat and better beef started several years ago, and Mr. Roper seems optimistic in plans, when he estimates that the goal of 100,000 more cattle will be reached in five years.

There have always been some good beef cattle in the province, but there had never been enough good animals to make much of an impression on the over all picture. Now that is being changed as Strathmore, Hereford and Angus breeders step up their activity, with importations of famous stock from Ontario distributed among many Island cattlemen in the past two years.

Angus men have been the most active as they have increased their membership by almost 10 times since the beef drive started. But the Hereford group is almost equally active, although the traditionally strong Strathmore association may not be making such a vigorous effort to expand at the present time.

Seeking a further incentive to increased production, cattlemen organized last year a P.E.I. Beef Producers Association with the idea of getting better quality and better prices. Several studies were studied to improve the price structure before a decision was made to try a program offered by the Canada Packers, for up to one year. It's based on the Winnipeg plan, where the packer bought a fill the Maritime deficiency—plus transportation costs for the beef to the market of transporting meat from Charlottetown to the Halifax market.

MARKETING YIELD The offer is not satisfied that this appears to be the best price point, the association director agreed recently to a Livestock Marketing Y program that would offer cattle on a competitive basis to regular buyers, and, these people feel, would be more likely to bring the best possible price for their animals.

"It doesn't mean," president Ernest Bell explained, "we shall have the yards right away, but it does mean that we are firmly committed to work towards this objective."

Tobacco, the thirty baby of Prince Edward Island's basic agricultural industry, is due for continued growth. Agriculture Minister Andrew MacRae said recently it could go somewhere close to 500 acres this year—and the development is being watched closely as it could greatly expand the province's annual farm income.

Veteran tobacco men from Ontario said several years ago, when the tobacco crop was still in the experimental stage, that the industry could double the \$40 million annual farm revenue.

Ernest Letch who came from Ontario to direct the provincial government's first experiments four years ago, suggested it could run to 100,000 acres and double or triple present farm income. Douglas Reelson who came from the fringe of the Ontario tobacco belt to grow the crop here, suggests the P.E.I. industry is as great as Ontario's where the gross value runs to \$150 million or more.

PLANT NEEDED Dr. Norman MacIver, associate director for crop research, Canada department of agriculture has recommended a future development far beyond the original hopes of these who sponsored the experiment.

He foresees a full-scale development from growing the crop to the export of the finished product. That would entail the establishment of a processing plant and a big company has suggested already it is interested in such a move when production reaches 1,000 acres.

The better growers produced more than 1,250 pounds per acre in the 1961 crop year and they reported good production again last year, despite the wettest growing season on record. Final figures on quantity were not available at the time of writing.

Farmers here are confident they can grow the crop as conditions were unusually unfavorable in the past two seasons. It was much too dry in 1961 while not being filled. R.D. Crawford will complete his postgraduate course for a Ph.D. degree at the University of Massachusetts in February. He is being transferred to Kentville and will return to Charlottetown in July.

Mr. Rolson, for example, believes manure from a grain fed lot of beef steers will supply needed fertility. Nothing else is as good, he insists. Many Ontario farmers truck it long distances, he reports. A neighbour, Mr. Rolson, for example, believes manure from a grain fed lot of beef steers will supply needed fertility. Nothing else is as good, he insists. Many Ontario farmers truck it long distances, he reports.

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CROP INSURANCE AND ARDA AGREEMENTS SIGNED IN '62 (L-R) Stewart Wright, Andrew MacRae and Alvin Hamilton

Albert Paisley who like Rolson is one of the better growers, suggests it may not work so well here. There's more humidity in Prince Edward Island than there is in Ontario, he explains.

The disengagement confirms Researcher Leclachur's insistence a great deal of study is needed in the immediate future. Experiments he has made thus far under the Research Branch Canada department of agriculture, include temperature checks at various levels—and this has proven to be most important—and tests with varieties and fertility.

Tests for calcium content were made from the 1962 plots. A September 24 report noted a large proportion of plants on several farms last fall—Mr. Vickers told growers here. The Ontario crop had been killed off 10 days earlier—but several tobacco plants left out for experimental purposes on several farms here with a high elevation were still unharmed a month later.

WIDELY USED The Hicks' variety is most widely used though there is some interest in other varieties in the search for the best. Fertility tests are equally important, and soil testing laboratories are a part of the team developing the Island's newest cash crop.

Many Ontario people have shown a keen interest in the development here, says there are several reasons. One cannot produce tobacco for sale there unless he can buy a farm that is under the marketing scheme. And a farm like he is developing here which will cost about \$40,000—that includes the land, the silos, packing barn, green house and dwelling—would cost \$100,000 to \$110,000 in Ontario, he explains.

The desire here is to keep the new industry for the average farmer and not let it fall under control of a syndicate or other menaced interest. An Ontario syndicate purchased options on several thousands of acres two years ago but they did not follow up with purchases. Growers here now have organized a marketing board to control marketing—it will automatically control production—so they can protect their industry if future developments make that necessary.

TRIED IN PAST Visiting tobacco people and governmental specialists say, P.E.I. may achieve through tobacco production the prosperity it has missed through lack of industry. It's the only farm crop that compares with industry, they have advised, as a producer of wealth.

Tobacco growing has been tried several times in the past. A tobacco manufacturer tried it half a century ago. Sir Andrew MacPhail, a P.E.I. man who is widely known as a writer and McGill University staff member, grew it experimentally for several years. Former livestock fieldman Harold Clay grew his own smoking tobacco for several years, but this is the first successful attempt at growing it commercially.

Experimental farm filling vital need

The function of the Experimental Farm with its research branch, formerly known as the science service, is to conduct research leading to the solution of agricultural problems peculiar to Prince Edward Island and the Atlantic region, and in co-operation with other research stations to obtain research information that has a national application.

The broad objective of the work at the farm here is to improve the fertility of Prince Edward Island soils, and to increase the production of protein cover crops. Emphasis is placed on soil and plant nutrition, breeding and management of forage crops for improved livestock production and soil stability, breeding and management of dairy cattle, breeding of cereal varieties for the Atlantic region, and control of insects and diseases of Prince Edward Island crops. Variety and cultural trials are conducted with potato, cereal, tobacco, forage, vegetable and small fruit crops.

PREPARING PAPERS In addition to conducting research, the staff here has been active in preparing research papers, special reports, and press articles, in assisting at conferences and in making many farmers who visit the farm for information and advice. In addition to 65 many individual visitors, 29 different farm organizations used the facilities at the Farm for meetings during the year.

Among the prominent visitors reported last year were the Rt. Hon. Viscount Amory, British high commissioner, and R. Bell, assistant agricultural attaché to the U.S. Embassy.

Superintendent R.C. Perent reports the work is handicapped by inability to fill vacancies caused by the austerity plan of the federal government, but he does express that this will be remedied at an early date.

Here are some examples Mr. Perent gave: G.B. Whiteside, soil specialist at the farm since July 1942, retired in June. His position has not been filled. W. Ramsay, poultryman, resigned in June to accept a position in the department of national defence. His position has not been filled.

Advertisement for Macdonald Ltd. featuring 'Beef Production' and 'Dairy Production' sections. It includes details about beef and dairy cattle, marketing, and contact information for Macdonald Ltd. in Charlottetown.

Large advertisement for 'Bevedere Store' featuring 'Red Bargain Fares' and 'Serving Islanders 14 Hours of the Day!'. It lists various food items and prices, and provides the store's address at 143 St. Peters Road.