

PRESS BULLETIN No. 52---April 1910

The Agricultural Experiment Station
FORT COLLINS, COLORADO

Hints to Plains Settlers
THE COW AS AN ASSISTANT

BY J. E. PAYNE

The history of the settlement of western Kansas and western Nebraska shows that the people who kept milch cows were able to hold their claims and make themselves homes, while their neighbors who refused to be in partnership with the cow usually failed. This has been found true of the early settlers who came to eastern Colorado during the first settlement. And it is likely to prove true of the people who are now settling in eastern Colorado. Some people may be able to get along without cows, but the chances are against the person who makes such an attempt.

It seems to be one of the foundation principles of agriculture that no system can long be followed at a profit which does not make provision for returning to the land in some form the elements of fertility taken from it by crops. So, no system of farming has ever been successful for any great length of time in any climate which does not include the keeping of live stock as one of its important features.

This principle applies with peculiar force to agriculture in eastern Colorado where so many of the sure crops have no market except the limited local market furnished by people who keep stock but do not raise feed.

The successful man, be he manager of a farm or a factory, is the man who plans to turn waste products into value. This is preeminently true of the eastern Colorado farmer.

Kafir, milo, sorghum, millet, stock beets, stock melons, the straw from grain, corn stalks and all other rough feed which is produced on the farm is of a nature that market for it is extremely limited. And some variety of this rough feed is produced in large quantities in every community every year. So much is produced that if the growers tried to sell it all directly for cash, it would not bring enough to pay for hauling it to market. As much is produced forty miles from a railroad as in the community joining the shipping station.

If some promoter should propose to put in paper mills which would use all this rough feed at a small price per ton—buying the roughness at the stack yard of the producer, the daily papers would herald him as a benefactor to those communities. The “home market” for which many tariff advocates have so often argued would be realized. All would consider their troubles were mainly over, if this should come to pass. But, if such mills should be located, they would be at central points—far from most of the producers. Long hauls of bulky material would make profit impossible.

The cow will furnish a home market for all the bulky feed which the farmer can raise, and will take it, delivered at his yard—paying about as much per ton as the care of her owner and his management will permit. The cream produced can be sold for cash, and the farm products will be marketed in concentrated form. What would have required a four-horse team to take to market can be hauled to market, when reduced to cream, in a one-horse buggy.

The income from dairy cows will depend upon the quality of the cows used, and the feed and care given them. The cows found in the country may not bring large returns, but it will pay better to use them than to use none. The herd can be graded up in a few years, and the quality of the calves raised from the beef-bred cows will partially compensate for the small returns in cream.

Shelter is one of the main needs for the dairy cow. The sod or adobe stables are the warmest stables which can be made. They can be made with but little expense except labor. The grass is free in many neighborhoods, and as long as it is free, it will be good management to use it during summer.

Use the rough feeds named above in connection with the free grass. Provide plenty of green feed in the shape of sweet corn or some other fodder for the dry times which are likely to come during summer. Plant plenty of stock melons and stock beets and store them for succulent winter food. They will be needed to feed with the sorghums and fodders.