

Observations Of A Country Vet

There Is Nothing New Under The Sun

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Reading a current report shows that the largest cow that is the best milker and produces the largest calf on your farm but still maintains her weight and re-breeds is the most profitable animal for you. The Bible says there is nothing new under the sun. Reading a report in Dr. Einsminger's Beef Cattle Handbook no. 16, 1979 says exactly the same thing.

Another interesting report is that in primitive Africa Ovamboland country cattle are black due to tradition, ignorance and superstition. According to Bonsma Red or White would be a better color. Mr. Dick Stewart of Florida however developed some very adaptable black cattle by selection for hair qualities and fertility. After a few years his home developed bulls were better than anything he could buy.

Louis Bromfield years ago decried the senseless practices of obese cattle in shows and fitted bulls. While not as bad we still have these practices. Fat in the scrotum and a gut developed to digest grain is a real problem that is still with us today. A two year old heifer should not be able to be shown unless she has a calf by side and is confirmed pregnant. Obesity today is a plague in man and beast. He criticized clean fence rows says they furnish habit for quail and song birds that help the bug problem. When buying a bull I get them after weaning and raise them like a heifer, with soy/gluten pellets, pasture, hay, no corn. Buy on numbers of parents. He will be cheaper and seller gets his money sooner and saves him time and feed.

Dr. V.A. Tiedjens was born on a farm and worked in agriculture all his life. He said fertilizer gets too much credit for plant growth and calcium and lime not enough. He said watch nitrogen because it can cause problems if not used properly. Unbalanced fertilizing can cause more problems than no fertilizer. He suggested a test plot to see what if any differences a practice makes. He favored sub soiling, a practice some specialist question. He said you can only learn from one who is learning not from one who reports others work. He also talks about liquid and foliar fertilizer that is not politically correct today.

Some years ago I had a problem with cows sticking AI and later recycling. I sent soil, water, blood and plant samples to a Dr. Robert T. Coffee of Newport, Iowa who ran a testing lab. Turns out I have iron in my well plus in the soil. This resulted in a tie up of copper. It seems most commercial minerals have iron oxide in it because it is cheap and they say people expect it to have that brown color, some salesmen may suggest iron is needed. Our UK nutritionist built a good mineral that has no added iron plus has chelated copper, zinc, managanese and selenium. Inorganic trace minerals look good on the label but don't work so well in the animal. Chelated trace minerals are attached to a protein and are more available. These elements help the immune system. A deficiency will cause vaccinations not to work well and in some cases vaccines may even do more harm than good.

Scours and pneumonia may result and look like regular BRD. An imbalance of major minerals will affect trace minerals. It's not how you make it cheap, it's how you make it good at least cost.

Wendell Berry talks about how the people in South America have farmed the same spots for hundreds of years and it still sustains them due to their practices. He talks about how the Amish take over "worn out" land and in a few years of their farming methods are producing alfalfa and other good products. The Bible says the meek shall inherit the earth, maybe it's them. Animal manure, crop rotation and green manures are keys to land building according to him.

Booker T. Washington was one of our greatest scientists. He patented hundreds of good ideas and turned them over to others and got on to the next project. Money was not an object with him. Henry Ford tried to hire him but he just kept on working at that little poor black college in Alabama. I talked to a retired veterinarian from there who knew him. He said it was not that he knew everything but that he worked on a project until he solved it. The accounting department was driven crazy by him because he would go months without cashing his checks. He was into compost, legumes, crop rotation and soil building like the other natural soil builders. He was a religious man who's policy was: Stay in tune with thy Creator and good ideas will come to you but don't use them for selfish reasons.

Dr. Booker T. Whatley, the horticulturist wrote the great book, "How to make \$1000,000.00 a year on 25 acres. His plan is cropping up all over the country. There is nothing new under the sun.

We are all in the farming game. It bothers me to hear some of us calling confinement animal farming "Factory Farming". That's joining hands with the HSUSA and Peta. These people are anti-meat. If they defeat the confinement people, the free range folks will not be far behind. Can you imagine the starvation we would have if the only eggs available cost \$4.50 a dozen? We need to do the best farm practices, heal the land and feed the people as best we can. We need to stay in tune with our Creator and not be selfish. A good name is better than great riches.

Robert DaBaca wrote a book "Courageous Cattlemen" in which he described some of the top cattlemen and how they developed their respective breeds of cattle. In every case good records, hard culling and honesty was the recipe.

Mob grazing will produce four times as much forage as conventional grazing and will prevent weeds, bush hogging and need for seed and fertilizer. That's what the Bison did, there is nothing new under the sun if we will just observe. Who was that baseball player who said "it's amazing what you can see if you will look".

Sure I am name dropping, there are a lot more names I could include but even then some good people would be left out. Good people come and go but sound principles stay if we will just abide by them. △

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