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CONTENTS

	PAGE		PAGE
Editorial	349	5. A Heritable Case of Female Sterility in Herbaceum Cotton	365
ORIGINAL ARTICLES :		6. The Present Position of Strain Nandyal 14 in the 'Northerns'	
1. Studies on the effect of Arrowing in Canes under Coimbatore Conditions	352	Area	368
2. Soil Condition as affected by Cropping in the Balck Soil Area of The Tinnevely District	355	Selected Article	371
3. Fruit Sucking Moths on Tomatoes & Their Control	360	Press Service	375
4. An African Ragi, Eleusine Coracana Graertn—The Finger Millet—With a Violet Purple Colour	363	Abstracts	376
		Gleanings	376
		Review	378
		Agricultural Jottings	378
		Correspondence	380
		Crop & Trade Reports	382
		College News & Notes	385
		Weather Review	386
		Departmental Notifications	388

Editorial.

Live-stock improvement. Ever since the Viceroy gave an impetus to the improvement of animal husbandry in India by presenting three pedigree bulls for free service in the Delhi District, many local boards and big land owners have come forward with commendable promptitude to maintain breeding bulls in several parts of the country. The Advisory Board of the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research have also arranged to constitute an animal husbandry bureau, to collect information regarding special characteristics of seven best breeds of cattle, and to open and maintain an official herd book for the registration of the performances of the pedigree cows. Besides several press notes by the Director of Public Information, Simla, and addresses by the Live-stock expert attached to the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research are being broadcasted from time to time with a view to educate the public on the importance of the development of live-stock. All these activities have gone a great way in encouraging one important aspect of animal husbandry viz. breeding.

If this impetus is to be kept up and if all the efforts taken so far are to be fruitful, it is extremely essential that arrangements should be made on an adequate scale for the rearing and maintenance of the progenies of pedigree animals. It has to be remembered at the same time that improved live-stock require feeds of higher nutritive ratios

for their maintenance than the low grades, and that a large proportion of the fodders raised under the Indian conditions on soils with low fertility and with no manure has a poorer nutritive value than those grown elsewhere. Naturally the maintenance of improved breeds will involve greater attention on the part of farmers with regard to the provision and choice of forage for them. They will then have to resort to a more extended use of concentrated foods like oilcakes to make up for any deficiency. Not only does this often prove much beyond the means of the average cultivator but even to those who can afford it. The low price which the most carefully tended animals fetch in the fairs and the lack of adequate demand for milk and its products in most of the villages especially those situated away from towns, prove deterrant. The condition of the calves of such a valuable breed as the Ongole that are being paraded daily by the milkmen in towns like Madras, and the practice obtaining in certain districts, of baling out water for irrigation from fairly deep wells by means of piccotahs when bullock power can be employed for the same purpose with greater profit, bear ample testimony if any is needed, to the unremunerative nature of cattle feeding.

Nutrition researches started by the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research and the local Governments have thrown much light on the importance of minerals in feeding, on the causes of malnutrition and on the methods of remedying the defects in cattle. They have not, however, reached a stage to recommend the adoption of a particular feeding standard which will keep them in condition without making any inroad on the slender purse of the farmers.

The Royal Commission on Agriculture recognised the importance and hugeness of this impediment in the progress of animal husbandry in India, and declared in no uncertain terms that 'no substantial improvement in the way of breeding is possible until cattle can be better fed' and that 'in general the rule that increase in production must be preceded by the increase in the food supply holds good'. It is on this fundamental consideration they have made a number of recommendations with regard to the provision and improvement of grazing grounds, the ensiling of crops and grasses, methods of improving coarse fodders, feeding cows during dry period, and the restriction of the number of animals to be kept by the farmers. Much headway has not yet been made in many of these proposals since the publication of the Commission's report. As such we feel that the exhortation made by Col. Olver the other day in his broadcast address that he feels 'that it should be the sacred duty for every good cultivator, of whatever creed, to keep at least one good cow, feed her and her progeny well under the stall fed conditions—which all progressive countries have been forced to adopt—and to mate her with a good bull of her own breed and type' will fall on deaf ears.

In this connection we wish to draw the attention of the readers to the proposals recently made by the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, United Kingdom, for safeguarding the beef industry of Great Britain. He indicated that "the Government propose to proceed on the basis of a regulated market with the maximum supplies to the consumer consistent with a reasonable level of remuneration for the producer. The Government have given earnest consideration to the position of the United Kingdom cattle producer under this arrangement and they propose to invite Parliament to make provision for a permanent scheme for the payment from the Exchequer of a subsidy to producers of fat cattle in the United Kingdom which while not stimulating as artificial expansion of the home industry will continue so long as and to the extent, that the situation may require". He has also announced that sums not exceeding £ 5,000,000 per annum would be set apart for the above purpose.

We venture to think that if the public are to respond adequately to the call of the Viceroy, an action on the part of Government somewhat along these lines is urgently called for. We would for instance recommend a considerable reduction in railway freight on bulky as well as concentrated foods, free distribution of grass seeds, encouragement of enclosing pasture lands either by remissions or by granting permission to divert the village panchayat funds, and offering subsidies to persons rearing good cattle and maintaining surplus stock in proper condition. If necessary a small cess may be levied on the import of dairy products and also on the export of edible oil cakes the annual values of which assume an enormous figure of 80 and 182 lacs of rupees respectively. We wish also to mention that the bulk of the consumers of the imported dairy products, coming as they do from richer classes, will least feel the strain of the imposition of the suggested tax.

We have dealt at some length with the collateral aspects of animal breeding in as much as we feel that they are of vital importance to livestock industry. We feel sure that the present Viceroy who was the Chairman of the Royal Commission on Agriculture will not leave any avenue unexplored to cheapen the cost of cattle foods and thereby link up the development of animal breeding with that of fodder supply not only with a view to implement the recommendations of the Commission, but also to see that his first act of love in India is placed in a suitable environment as to develop and unfold all its potentialities to the benefit of the agriculturist.