

DAIRYING AT TEMPLESTOWE.

By **F.W.L.**

IMPORTANT MILK PRODUCING CENTRE.

The prettily situated township of Templestowe, which lies in the valley of the River Yarra two miles from Heidelberg, is surrounded by land of good quality. It is used principally for dairying and fruit-growing, both of which industries are established on a firm basis. The close proximity of the district to Melbourne (10 miles by road) and its suitability for the production of milk make it an important factor in contributing to the fresh milk supply of the city. It is essential that dairymen who cater for this trade keep only the best cows and feed them properly in order to secure the maximum output of milk and to maintain it at a consistently high level throughout the entire year. The majority of the herds are composed of crossbred or grade cows, which are of excellent dairy quality, and in most instances pedigree bulls are run with them. The plough is made to play a leading part in the operations of dairymen. Fodder crops to supplement the pastures are extensively grown, while concentrates, which form a regular part of the ration, are purchased. The rich Yarra flats could not be excelled for the purpose of dairying, and, although the land is of a high capital value, the industry is profitable under an efficient system of management.

FORWARD METHODS.

A dairyman whose methods are calculated to bring about the best results is Mr. E. J. Serennikoff, owner of Comely Park, a farm of 80 acres situated on the

Bank, a farm of 80 acres, situated on the Yarra, to which it has a frontage of one mile and a half, close to Templestowe. The property is subdivided into nine paddocks, the largest of which is 14 acres. The stock has constant access to the river, and is thus able to obtain fresh water at all times. There is abundance of shelter and shade for the animals, so that the natural conditions for successful dairying are all that could be desired. Mr. Serennikoff, who is a native of Russia, has seen a considerable amount of active service. Prior to coming to Australia he was engaged in suppressing the Boxer rising in 1900, and he also fought in the Russo-Japanese war in 1904-5. On the outbreak of the great war he was a resident of Victoria, and joined up with the A.I.F., taking part in the landing and evacuation at Gallipoli, where he was wounded. He has been running Comely Bank as a dairy farm for the last five years, and has recently taken as a partner in the dairy part of the business Mr. E. Harrison, who acts as resident manager. His progressive spirit has found expression in the erection of a suspension bridge over the river, capable of carrying a load of five tons, which brings Comely Bank within two and a half miles of Heidelberg, or half the distance that had to be travelled before the bridge was built. Since this improvement was effected six months ago, the milk is despatched to Melbourne, and delivered to customers daily by motor-lorry. The vehicle leaves a little before 8 a.m., and returns about 11 a.m., and it is estimated that approximately 35 miles is travelled each day in delivering the milk and picking up empty cans. The saving in time and the efficiency of the service make it well worth while.

THE DAIRY HERD.

Between 40 and 50 acres is under cultiva-

between 40 and 50 acres is under cultivation, which leaves approximately 30 acres of pasture for the dairy herd. The average number of cows milked is 42, and they consist of Ayrshire and Friesian types. The herd bull is a pedigree Friesian which was purchased, together with nine pedigree cows, at the sale of the executors of the late Mr. D. Mitchell, Cave Hill, Lilydale, two years ago. Mr. Serennikoff has found the Friesian so satisfactory in every way that it is not improbable that he will establish a stud of this breed at Comely Bank in the near future. In addition to the bull, which is two years of age and shows a deal of dairy and Friesian quality, he has 12 cows, 12 heifers, and four calves, all pure, so that he has already the nucleus of a stud. He leases several paddocks in the vicinity for running dry cows and springers on, and as they come in they take their place in the herd, and cows that are being dried off are transferred to one of these pasture runs. The milking shed, which contains 12 bails, is well drained and kept scrupulously clean. There is a feed box in each bail, and every one contains a salt lick. The heaviest producing cows are rugged at night from about April until the beginning of September. "It is not possible for a cow to do her best unless she is kept warm," remarked Mr. Serennikoff, "as cows exposed to cold rains shrink in milk flow and may yield milk poor in fat." He considers ruggeding good economy, and the money spent in purchasing rugs well spent.

FEEDING.

The cows are regularly fed a well-balanced ration, to which they respond at the milk-pail. Their food is prepared every morning thus:—About 5cwt. or 6cwt. of "green stuff" is put through a chaffcutter, and mixed with approximately 4cwt. of lucerne hay chaffed. A hundred pounds of Polly-

day chaffed. A hundred pounds of Polly-feed, previously soaked for 24 hours, is added to the mixture. This and 100lb. of crushed grain, which is issued separately, forms the daily menu, excepting in the summer months, when bran is substituted for the Polly-feed. The minimum allowance of the mixture is between 16lb. and 17lb. per head morning and evening. Freshly calved cows and extra heavy producers re-

ceive up to 8lb. each in excess of that amount. As a cow's milk flow decreases so are the concentrates, excepting Polly-feed, reduced until she reaches the stripping stage, when they are discontinued. Mr. Serennikoff realises that cows producing a large amount of milk and butter-fat will naturally consume more food than those yielding less, just as hard-working horses require more than those at light work. The yield of high-producing cows is, however, so much larger that it more than offsets the higher cost of their food. They therefore produce milk and butter-fat much more cheaply than poorer cows. "A cow must show a profit on her upkeep," he observed, "or she is no use to me." In the cold weather lucerne hay is fed in liberal quantity, which furnishes part of the protein so vital in milk production. It would be impossible to keep up the outturn of milk or the standard of quality unless the cows were well fed and cared for.

GREEN FODDER CROPS.

The whole of the green fodder crops, which embrace maize, millet, oats, skinless barley, and Sudan grass, are grown for the exclusive use of the dairy herd. With the exception of millet, they are cut and chaffed and fed in the manner already described, which is considered the least wasteful method of utilising them. Mr. Serennikoff realises the value of succulence in the cows' ration for winter

succulence in the cows' ration for winter feeding to take the place of summer pasture. The value of succulence is due in no small measure to its beneficial laxative effect, and to its palatability, which tends to stimulate digestion. Not only should succulent feed be supplied, but the rest of the ration for cows yielding a good flow of milk should be as appetising as possible. For this reason green fodder crops are planted, so that they will be available for as great a length of time as is possible throughout the year. The first crops sown in the spring are millet and Sudan grass, which are put in during September and October. The rate of seeding is millet 12lb., and Sudan grass 14lb., with 1cwt. bone and super. per acre. In November maize is sown at the rate of two bushels, together with 1cwt. super., per acre. Early in January one bushel of skinless barley and 10lb. of Berseem clover, with 1cwt. bone and super. to the acre, are planted. The following month two bushels of white oats and 1cwt. super. per acre are sown. In April the maize stubble is put under Algerian oats, and in June the Sudan grass stubble is seeded with skinless barley. All the crops are sown with a drill, and in addition to the artificial fertilisers, farmyard manure is carefully saved and applied to the land. There are not many weeks in the year that the cows have not got a plentiful supply of green food.

SUDAN GRASS.

This is the first season that Mr. Serenikoff has tried Sudan grass, and the results have been entirely satisfactory from every standpoint. It was sown in two different ways, by itself and with a crop of maize, and both answered admirably. Just after the maize plants were through the

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surface of the ground 7lb. of Sudan grass seed, with 1cwt. of super., was drilled between the rows of maize. When the maize was cut the Sudan grass was found to be from 3ft. to 3½ft. high, and in order to clean up the paddock the cows were turned into it for about an hour and a half daily. They eat it with avidity, and greatly relished the succulent, tender stems and leaves. No trouble was experienced from bloat, of which there was not the slightest sign during the time the animals were pastured on the crop. They milked exceptionally well, better, Mr. Serennikoff thinks, than on any other fodder. He considers that it would be advantageous to graze it when about 6in. high, to encourage the plants to stool, and he intends to adopt that course in the future. Sudan grass can be grazed, cut for green feed, or made into hay, and it therefore serves a triple purpose. It is an excellent feed for horses that are "off-colour," and it was used for some of the equines at Comely Bank with good effect until about a fortnight ago. Mr. Serennikoff considers Sudan grass a valuable addition to the list of green fodder crops he has grown, and he will regularly include it from this out. He is contemplating cutting out millet and substituting it, a course of action he is encouraged to adopt by the preference displayed by the cows when they have free access to both.