

History of New Zealand Milking Shorthorns

THE success achieved by the Milking Shorthorn herds at the Dilworth School of Agriculture, Auckland, and at the Ruakura Farm of Instruction (now the Ruakura Animal Research Station) is one of the topics dealt with in this article by J. M. Ranstead, of Matangi, which concludes a series on the history of the New Zealand Milking Shorthorns. The first and second parts of this history appeared in the May and June issues of the "Journal," respectively.

THE last of the early importations of Australian Illawarra Shorthorns was made late in 1915 by the Dilworth Trust Board. The Dilworth School of Agriculture, Otahuhu, Auckland, had just been established under the direction of Mr. Primrose McConnell, late manager of the Ruakura Farm of Instruction, and Mr. McConnell had set out to build up an outstanding dairy herd. After buying a number of the best non-pedigree Milking Shorthorns that could be obtained locally and at Mr. Gordon Salway's sale, where he also bought the imported Darbalara cow Dainty 7th and her heifer calf Lady Mary, Mr. McConnell imported 2 bulls and 7 cows from Australia. The publicity that had been given to the show and production records of the Darbalara cattle and the reputation that Mr. McConnell had made, through his numerous articles in the New Zealand agricultural journals and farming papers, created a wonderful demand for the young bulls bred at Dilworth. Bull calves by Marlborough of Darbalara (imp.) out of non-pedigree cows without official records of production sold readily by private sale for prices up to 100 guineas.

Record Prices at Dispersal

Though the herd proved such a success, the School of Agriculture did not prosper, and in 1919 the Trust Board decided to disperse the herd. At the sale, held on December 1, 1919, breeders from all over New Zealand attended and record prices were realised.

Such high prices had never been heard of for Milking Shorthorns in New Zealand and a sensation was created when Mr. James Parkinson, of Opotiki, paid 650 guineas for the imported bull Marlborough of Darbalara.

Mr. Parkinson also paid 350 guineas for the beautiful imported cow Posey 3rd of Coleville.

Mr. McConnell's purchases at the Salway sale proved a good investment, as the imported cow Dainty 7th of Darbalara brought the highest price for a female at the Dilworth sale, being purchased by Mr. P. J. McLeod, of Helensville, for 365 guineas. The imported Lady Mary, also bought from Mr. Salway, went to Mr. J. Law, Waikato, for 100 guineas and her daughter Dilworth Lily, by Mr. Salway's imported bull Rose Prince, went to Mr. G. Chamberlain, Ponui Island, Auckland, for 140 guineas. Dilworth Chic, Dainty 7th's daughter by Marlborough, went to Mr. McLeod for 100 guineas. Mr. Salway's non-pedigree cow Bell Block Nancy, which had given the highest yield in the Dilworth herd, died before the sale, but she had paid her way, for

her bull calf by Marlborough had been sold privately for 100 guineas. Her daughter Dilworth Nancy 2nd, by Marlborough, sold at the sale for 80 guineas to Mr. Hann, of Stratford.

The other imported stock sold well: Rose 4th of Darbalara was bought by Mr. J. L. Turnbull, Christchurch, for 150 guineas. She was a beautiful cow and the following year won the championship at the Christchurch show. She was considered a model of Shorthorn dairy type and is the cow depicted in the standard of excellence published in the New Zealand Milking Shorthorn Association's herd books. Vera 2nd of Coleville was purchased by Mr. B. H. Slack, Otaki, for 105 guineas and Caroline 3rd of Darbalara by Mr. J. McGovern, Waikato, for 91 guineas. Dilworth Beauty, out of Caroline 3rd by Lily's Cupid of Darbalara, was bought by Mr. J. Glasgow, Waikato, for 168 guineas and her twin 11-months-old daughters by Marlborough were bought by Mr. McGovern for 78 guineas apiece. Dilworth Constance, out of Connie 4th of Darbalara by Emblem of Darbalara, was bought by Mr. Law for 81 guineas.

Some of the non-pedigree cattle that Mr. McConnell had purchased locally sold for high prices. Dilworth Belle was sold for 320 guineas to Mr. Turnbull, and Mr. J. Irwin, Auckland, paid 180 guineas for her daughter by Marlborough.

The success of the Dilworth sale stimulated interest in the Milking Shorthorns and created a great demand for bulls. Until that time young bulls had been sold privately at the Ruakura Farm of Instruction, but in April, 1920, an auction sale was held which proved so successful that the sale became an annual event.

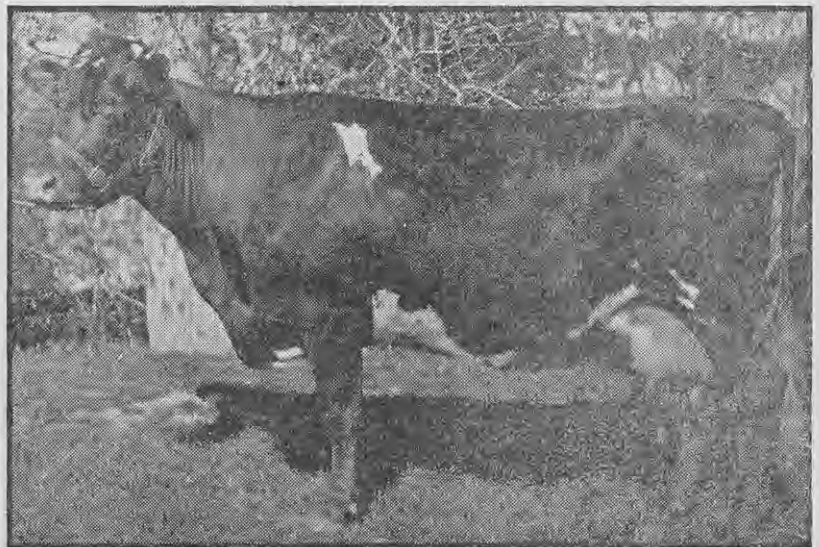
Ruakura Herd

When Mr. McConnell went to Ruakura as manager he was a keen admirer of Milking Shorthorn cattle, having had considerable experience of this breed while dairying in Britain. In 1913, while at Ruakura, he had reported:—

Numerous enquiries are to hand for Shorthorn bulls of the milking strain, and, as showing the confidence that is now being placed in this breed, I may mention that a newly dropped calf from one of our best cows was sold for £35. It is hoped that our small herd of non-pedigree Shorthorns will be improved by the importation of a few of the best that can be imported (14).

The small herd of non-pedigree Shorthorns referred to had been purchased by Mr. McConnell at various dispersal sales of dairy herds in the Waikato. The herd was headed by the Australian Illawarra Shorthorn bulls Melba's Prince of Darbalara (imp.) and Dominion Abram 2nd of Ruakura (imp.), but it was not till after Mr. McConnell left Ruakura that more Illawarras were added to the herd. When Mr. McConnell arrived at Ruakura he found a large herd of almost purebred Coates' Herd Book Shorthorns, headed by English bulls that had been imported for the special purpose of being made "available to dairy farmers for service to approved

14. McConnell, Primrose (1913): "The New Zealand Journal of Agriculture," volume 6, page 32.



Mr. R. V. Brown's Waimea Domingo, G.H.T. 602lb. fat, winner of 63 championships, including three Royal Show championships, and three times champion over all breeds; a most successful blending of Coates' Herd Book and Australian Illawarra Shorthorns.