

# Community and Cooperative Breeding of Farm Animals

BY CHARLES S. PLUMB



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"It ain't the guns nor armament, nor funds that they can pay,  
But the close cooperation that makes them win the day;  
It ain't the individual, nor the army as a whole,  
But the everlastin' team work of every bloomin' soul."

—KIPLING

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# Community and Cooperative Breeding of Farm Animals

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**Community breeding of farm animals** is a feature associated with breed development and improvement. The history of the breeds of farm animals shows that, in communities more or less restricted in area, people first became interested in developing a type of livestock which, in their opinion, was best suited to the local conditions, and rendered the largest returns for the food and care involved. Very naturally some breeders were more intelligent and more progressive than others, which was reflected in the class of animals they produced. These men found themselves working toward a common end, even tho the effort was free of organization. In time the community became prominent for the excellence of the herds of these breeders. In Europe we find many sections, in each of which a certain breed has developed that has seemed to be peculiarly fitted to the local environment. Examples of this sort may be found in the Hereford cattle of Herefordshire, the Percheron horses of La Perche, France, the Jersey cattle on the island of Jersey, the Berkshire swine of Berkshire, and the Shropshire sheep of Shropshire. These are illustrations that might be extended into a large number.

**Cooperative breeding of farm animals** has invariably resulted from community breeding. Until in recent years, the plan of cooperation has been a rather natural one—a group of men combining to establish a breed standard, to protect its purity, and provide means of record for herds or individuals. The first cooperative movement for the systematic promotion of a breed, was perhaps with the people on the island of Jersey, who in 1763 by legislation prohibited the introduction of other cattle to the island, excepting for slaughter. In England, thru cooperative effort, as early as 1820, a herd book showing the breeding of Shorthorn cattle was published. Eventually, cooperative organization became a necessity in promotion of each of the established breeds, otherwise there would have been no means of standardizing the breed and protecting its purity.

Another form of cooperative organization is comparatively recent, and has a somewhat different purpose. This is the cooperation of a number of persons, engaged in breeding a well established breed, who cooperate to promote the same in their community, be-

lieving it a worthy cause, wherein all concerned are benefited financially and otherwise. For instance, a group of breeders may organize to promote the Guernsey breed, as best suited to the local environment.

#### REASONS WHICH JUSTIFY COMMUNITY BREEDING

(1) **A logical policy in breeding** is not characteristic of the American stockman. His herd more often than not consists of so-called representatives of more than one breed, on the females of which he uses males without well-directed plan or purpose. The work he does as a breeder is to tear down and destroy, altho he does not realize it. One may travel the length and breadth of the United States and find countless examples of destructive breeding of this sort. Operating against a host of such animal breeders, is a comparatively small number of men who with fixity of purpose strive to produce purebred animals along well defined lines, and whose herds and flocks are the salvation of the whole livestock business. The successful breeders of the world work along carefully studied lines of mating from which they may logically expect certain results. Community breeders more naturally become interested in comparative studies in form and function, as well as pedigree, than do isolated independent breeders.

(2) **One breed is better for a community than many.** It has been well established, more especially in Europe, that in those sections where but one breed of a class exists, the community is enriched thereby. The opportunity of the buyer is so much greater where only one breed prevails, that he seeks this community over all others, for here he finds the greatest selection. If there be but one herd, then the choice is restricted, and the expense of visit does not justify the buyer. He prefers a locality offering him the greatest choice, or where he may secure a considerable number of animals. That is perfectly logical. An Ohio county in which only one breed of swine was kept, would bring in a far greater number of buyers for purebred hogs, than it would if six breeds prevailed.

(3) **Community breeding stimulates prices and trade.** The breeders take a keen personal interest in the different herds, and promote recognition of meritorious animals. Competition in purchase secures a higher average price and more activity in trade. In those communities in America where organized breeding is most strongly developed this is especially true.

(4) **Community breeding promotes confidence** on the part of the breeders in one another. The primary purpose is to work together for a common end, with personal selfishness and jealousy





some years a number of American associations, notably those promoting dairy cattle, have engaged in cooperative advertising in certain periodicals. Other associations have published literature for free distribution which contained special information regarding herds of the community, so that prospective buyers might with little trouble get in touch with those offering stock for sale. The cost of such joint advertising is very moderate. There are today a number of excellent periodicals, each of which is devoted to the promotion of one breed. The single-breed paper is always actively cooperative in publicity of the herds of a community at a less expense than occurs under independent breeding conditions.

An interesting example of community advertising is thus described by R. A. Hayne:\*

“At Lake Mills, Wisconsin, there is a most unusual sight, unusual in size and subject, visible a quarter of a mile away, and worth no doubt to both town and county uncountable times what it cost: On the side of a large brick building right opposite the square and across the street from the town park, so plainly in sight that you cannot go past or thru the town without seeing it, is a huge painting of a Holstein cow in natural colors, and around her, also plainly visible at a distance, are the names of 14 Holstein breeders and their locations. Who will say that Lake Mills did not act wisely in displaying such an advertisement instead of the familiar trademark of the amber fluid that ‘made Milwaukee famous’?”

(7) **Successful breeding brings local fame to a community**, which is a valuable asset. This has been brought out in a marked degree, for example, in the development of Holstein-Friesian interests in Geauga County, Ohio; of Guernsey herds in Waukesha County, Wisconsin; and the saddle horse industry in Kentucky and Missouri. More and more the public will learn of certain communities in America famous for their herds and flocks, where the opportunities for purchase are more attractive than elsewhere.

(8) **Community breeding encourages the interest of the young people**, for where practiced we find the most progressive breeders, the very best examples of farm animals, and homes of comfort. In a community frequently visited by outside buyers who come to inspect the herds, the young people learn to respect the importance of farm animals, and become deeply interested in their development. The future of our livestock industry is dependent upon the active, intelligent interest of the young people.

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\**National Stockman and Farmer*, August 10, 1918.

## BEGINNINGS OF COMMUNITY BREEDING IN AMERICA

The first unorganized community breeding in America, perhaps, was that of Merino production in Vermont, Pennsylvania, and Ohio. The first flocks of importance were established very early in the last century, and by the middle of the century many flocks of Merinos occupied the hills of Vermont, western Pennsylvania, and eastern Ohio. So famous did Vermont become as a Merino center that in far-away Australia, to which these sheep were exported, the natives supposed all Merinos from America were grown in that state, and they were known as Vermont Merinos.

The first organized community breeding association in America, so far as the writer can learn, was the Western Reserve Holstein-Friesian Association, which was organized in 1905 at Burton,



A group at the Annual Field Day of the Geauga County Holstein-Friesian Association at Alexander Watt's, June 8, 1917.

Gauga County, Ohio. Later the name was changed to the Geauga County Holstein-Friesian Association. This organization had a very successful start, and in the spring of 1912 had 154 members, representing 4000 head of cattle. The primary purpose of this association is to extend the interest in the Holstein-Friesian breed of cattle in the community, and to encourage among the members intellectual and social development. An annual picnic is a feature of this association, on which occasion some guest of prominence is invited to address the members. This association has been most successful, and large numbers of cattle have been shipped from the herds of its members to various parts of America, as well as to Mexico, Japan, and South Africa. Many great milk and butterfat records of the world-breaking class, have been made in these herds.



**The Waukesha County (Wisconsin) Guernsey Breeders' Association**, established in 1906, is one of the most notable community breeding associations in America, and deserves notice here, as demonstrating what cooperation may do for a breed. In 1908 the members of this association owned 277 purebred and 436 grade Guernseys, and by 1914 the purebreds had increased to 2000. In 7 years we see an increase of 700 percent in the Guernseys in this county. During the 4 years 1910 to 1914, the butterfat production in the county increased an average of 100 pounds per cow. At the annual sale of the association in 1918 there were sold \$23,460 worth of cattle in one day. Sixty-one head averaged \$383 each. In one year 66 breeders in this county are reported as owning over \$400,000 worth of Guernseys. From a very modest beginning with a membership of 10, Waukesha County has become the Guernsey center of America, and is a notable example of what may be accomplished by intelligent community breeding.

**The Delaware County (Ohio) Percheron Breeders' Association** organized in 1913, represents a cooperative movement in the community, where Percheron horses have been bred since the middle of the last century. This organization is primarily to promote the Percheron horse breeding industry in Delaware and adjoining counties in Ohio. Article II of the constitution, outlining the object of the association, specifies, (1) closer business relationship between farmer, breeder, seller, and buyer; (2) advocating cooperation in horse buying, breeding, and selling; (3) the dissemination of educational matter relative to breeding, rearing, feeding and management; (4) to assist in the observation and enforcement of existing legislation relating to ownership of stallions for public service and encourage and insist upon honest registration; (5) to assist farmers and breeders in obtaining purebred stallions and making sales; (6) to encourage proper classification and premium lists for horses at state, county and other fairs; (7) to discourage the use of unsound stallions and mares for breeding; (8) to encourage the use of purebreds, and educate against the use of grade and crossbred sires.

This association holds a Percheron show each fall, and employs judges of national reputation to make the awards. The Percheron show at Delaware is the main attraction of the so-called Delaware Pumpkin Show, and large numbers of people attend. Each year at the Ohio State Fair, in the Percheron classes Delaware County is largely represented. The association has about 85 members, most of whom own small studs. This is one of the largest Percheron breeding communities in the United States, and buyers come here

from a wide range of territory outside of Ohio. In 1917 five head were purchased from this community for shipment to Japan.

**Shorthorn community breeders' associations in Ohio** are among the most recent organizations in the state for promoting a breed. The Ohio Company for Importing Shorthorn Cattle, organized in 1833 at Chillicothe, sowed good seed for the breeding of these cattle in Ohio. In some communities in the state, Shorthorn cattle have prevailed in comparatively large numbers for three-fourths of a century. Since the Great War began breeders have become more active, and as a result, several county associations have come into existence. In the spring of 1916 the Harrison County Shorthorn Breeders' Association was organized at Cadiz. It has held four successful cooperative sales. On August 19, 1916, the Madison County Shorthorn Breeders' Association was organized at London, with 75 charter members. This association has held four cooperative sales, attended by a very large number of buyers, and good prices have prevailed. In April, 1917, the Seneca County Shorthorn Breeders' Association was organized at Tiffin, with 26 members. In November, 1917, the Crawford County Shorthorn Breeders' Association was organized at Bucyrus, and recently in 1918 an association has been organized in Licking County. These Shorthorn associations all receive the support of the American Shorthorn Breeders' Association and of the Ohio Shorthorn Breeders' Association, the latter being one of the oldest and strongest state associations in this country.

#### COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS NOT ENGAGED IN SPECIAL BREED PROMOTION

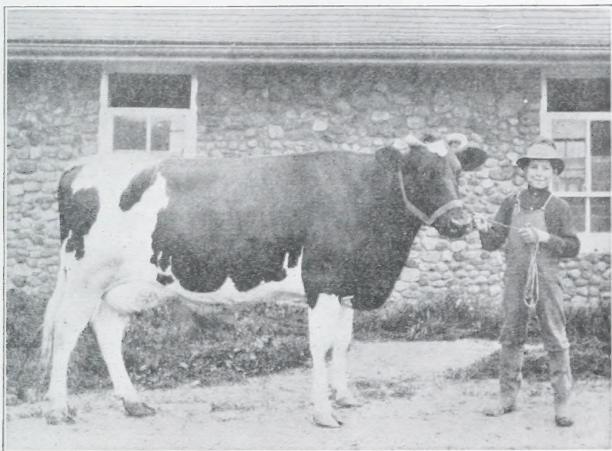
Community breeding associations of various kinds that are not devoted to promoting a special breed of livestock, yet that are engaged in cooperative breeding operations, deserve recognition here, for they have an important field of their own. There are several forms of these, of which the following are examples.

**Cooperative bull clubs** were first suggested by Prof. R. S. Shaw of Michigan in 1907 to the State Board of Agriculture. The plan proposed was that from 15 to 30 farmers in a community owning dairy cows have a joint ownership in five bulls. The cattle owned by the members of the association were to be grouped into breeding blocks of from 50 to 60 cows to a block, or five breeding blocks. Each group or block of cows was to have a bull assigned to it, where it remained in service 2 years, after which time, each bull was to be moved on to a new block. On this basis, the five bulls in 10 years,



provided they lived and were fertile, would have gone the rounds of the five blocks. This plan met with the approval of the Michigan State Board of Agriculture, and, with the services of a special organizer, in 1908 the Michigan Agricultural College organized ten cooperative bull clubs, and about 50 registered sires were bought; and, 2100 cows that in 1907 had been bred to grade and scrub bulls, were in 1908-09 bred to those that were purebred.

This movement found great favor, and has been taken up in many other states. According to a statement by the United States



A cow in the Geauga County Holstein-Friesian Association owned by Alexander Watt.

Department of Agriculture, on July 1, 1918, there were 36 active bull associations in the United States, having 1174 members. The average number of members to each association was 33, with ownership of five bulls, and 15 purebred and 222 grade cows, 45 cows being allowed for each bull. The total number of animals in the 36 associations were 189 bulls and 8521 cows. Most favorable reports have come from these bull associations, as, for example, 150 farmers in Maryland, Michigan, and Minnesota report increased value from use of sires during one generation of from 30 to 86 percent, or an average of 65 percent. A survey of eight districts in Iowa, Minnesota, and Massachusetts showed that 1219 farmers owned 817 bulls having an average value of \$76.00. There were four times as many bulls as were needed, while the money invested in them

would have bought the requisite number of the right kind of bulls at an average cost of \$283.

**General livestock community breeders' associations** have been organized in various localities in the United States. In this case, the plan has been to promote more than one breed in a community. For example, the Tompkins County (New York) Breeders' Association, which is said to have about 200 members, was organized "to promote breeding and improvement of high grade and purebred livestock in Tompkins County, and to aid its members in buying, breeding, and selling first class animals." This association has an annual field day, offers special premiums for its members at the County Fair, carries advertising in two agricultural papers, publishes a monthly journal, etc.

In Iowa there is the Shelby County Fine Stock Exchange, which is a county association to promote the breeding and selling of the livestock of that community. From time to time a "Breeders' Directory" of the county is published, the last one, issued in 1918, containing information concerning the merits of the animals of the county, with a list of 22 horse, 120 cattle, and 110 hog breeders. Commenting editorially on such an association as this, the *National Stockman and Farmer* well says:

"This Directory and the spirit back of it is an example that a thousand counties could and should follow at once. Wouldn't an organization of the breeders of your community or county be a good thing? Would you enjoy the community and breeders' spirit that boosts for all? Or are you one of the pin-headed folks who hate to see a neighbor make a good sale? Would you enjoy taking a prospective customer over to another breeder or would you rather slip him a dirty little confidential tip that would be dead sure to queer any sale? Would you patronize a neighbor's sire and gladly welcome him to the use of yours at a reasonable price, or would you be afraid that the neighbor might raise some better stock than yours? How do you stand? Are you broad-minded, have you grown to a size where you can see that whatever helps the community helps you, or are you one of the narrow-gauge, small-souled type, too much wrapped in your own little affairs to see any good in a breeders' association? We are happy to say that folks who persist in staying in the selfish, community-killing class are scarce when real-betterment movements are started and more than likely you are not one of them."

## METHODS OF ORGANIZATION

The methods of organization of community breeders' associations will vary according to whether the work is to be special or general breeding, or simply a bull club. One can readily understand that an association to promote Hereford cattle covers a rather different subject from one engaged in breeding Shropshire sheep. As a preliminary move, assuming that enough members may be secured to organize an association, as for example ten, then after free conference and discussion, a temporary committee on organization should be chosen. This committee should be instructed to investigate, and at a later date, report on a permanent form of organization, in which the work of the association may be set forth.

**The constitution of a breeders' association** may have much in common with other associations engaged in promoting livestock, for this is an instrument which defines the purpose of the organization and matters of legislation. For example, here is the constitution of one Ohio association, which might be amended or changed to suit the needs of some other breed and community.

### ARTICLE I. *Name*

This organization shall be known as The Delaware County, Ohio, Percheron Breeders' Association.

### ARTICLE II. *Object*

The object of this association is to promote the Percheron horse breeding industry in Delaware and adjoining counties in Ohio. (Then follows a statement of nine methods of promoting said object.)

### ARTICLE III. *Membership*

*Section 1.* Any horse breeder, farmer, owner or importer of Percherons, officers of an agricultural association, teacher of animal husbandry or agriculture, editor or publisher of livestock or agricultural papers, or graduate veterinarian, shall be entitled to become a member of this association.

*Section 2.* Honorary membership may be conferred upon any party interested, or active, in advancement of the horse breeding industry, by a majority vote at any annual or special meeting of the association.

### ARTICLE IV. *Dues*

A fee of \$3 shall be collected from each member annually.

### ARTICLE V. *Officers*

*Section 1.* The officers of this association shall consist of President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer, whose terms of office shall be one year, or until their successors are elected.

*Section 2.* The Executive Committee shall consist of three members, who will act with the President and Secretary of the association.



## ARTICLE VI. *Duties of Officers*

*Section 1.* It shall be the duty of the President to preside at all the meetings of the society, and enforce the observance of such rules and regulations as will be for the best interests of the organization; to appoint all regular committees as he may deem expedient for the welfare of the association, and to call special meetings for the transaction of special business, at any time.

*Section 2.* In the absence of the President, the Vice President shall preside and perform all duties of the President.

*Section 3.* It shall be the duty of the Secretary to keep all records of the association; to report the results of all cooperative work carried on in general.

*Section 4.* The Treasurer shall collect fees, keep secure all funds of the association and pay out money upon the written order of the Secretary, signed by the President.

## ARTICLE VII. *Amendments*

This Constitution may be amended at any annual meeting by a two-thirds vote of the members of the association present.

**The by-laws of a community breeders' association** provide the widest range of expression as to difference in methods of transacting the special business in hand. Some associations include in the by-laws statement of dues, duties of the officers or employes, time of election, etc. However this may be, under the by-laws is usually included the special rules and regulations relative to the work of the association. As an example of such special rules, the following are quoted from those in use by the Poca District Hereford Breeders' Association of Kanawha County, West Virginia:

*Section 10.* It shall be the duty of the officers of this association to purchase the necessary sires and negotiate with competent parties within the association, centrally located, to care for and handle the bulls at a sum not to exceed \$. . . . . per annum. All bulls purchased shall have satisfactory pedigree and registration papers, and shall be tuberculin tested, and the herd from which they are purchased shall be known to be free from contagious abortion.

*Section 11.* Should any contagious or infectious disease appear in the herd of any member of this association, he must forfeit his right to patronize males of the association until such a time as his herd is declared free from disease by a competent veterinarian.

*Section 12.* A service fee of \$. . . . . shall be charged members of the association, to be collected at time of service. A charge of \$. . . . . will be made to non-members in case the association should accept the patronage of the same.

*Section 13.* The officers of the association shall see to it that each sire is kept in a strong, vigorous condition, in moderate flesh, in clean surroundings, with sufficient yardage to afford ample exercise in the open air and sunshine, in addition to protection of the stable. Bulls shall not be used for service under one year of age, nor shall heifers be bred to calve under 24 months of age. During the rush of the breeding season single service only will be allowed. At no time shall the bull run with the herd.

*Section 14.* Cross-breeding and in-breeding shall not be practiced.

*Section 15.* All members shall report to the Secretary at the end of the year calves born of either sex during the year and sired by the association sires.

**County breed associations**, however, are organized in many cases for promotion purposes, without the idea of cooperative ownership of animals. In this case each breeder agrees to keep his herd pure, showing commendable animals, promoting a healthy condition, and cooperating especially in advertising the stock of the members, and bearing a share in the cost of the same, or in holding cooperative sales. In such cases, the Secretary attends to advertising, supervises the sales, and charges each person involved his share of the expense. Frequently a sales manager is employed, who attends to the details associated with the sale, such as advertising, expense of the auctioneer, printing the catalogue, renting sale stable, hiring help, etc., charging so much per head to each consigner for the animals sold.

**By-Laws for cooperative bull clubs** express a different method of administration from those of associations promoting purebred herds. Also, in these clubs, the bulls are jointly owned by members of the association. The following are suggested as serviceable by-laws to be followed more or less as conditions justify.

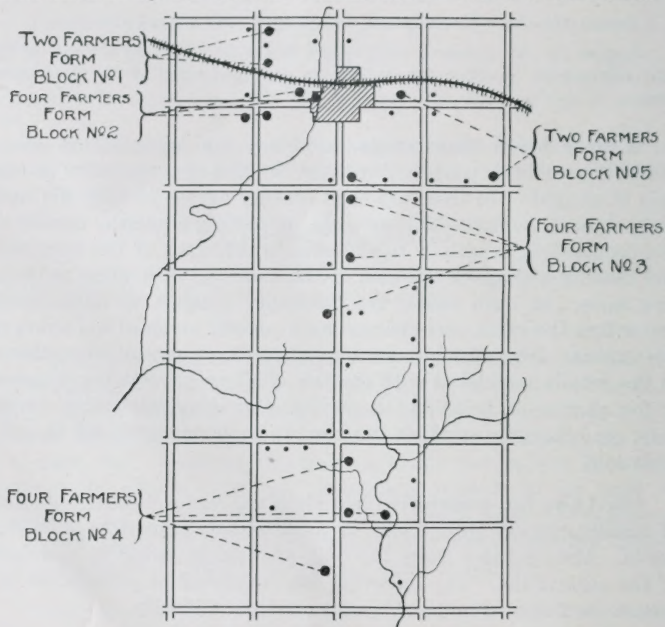
*Section 1.* This association shall use purebred service bulls only, and of the ----- breed.

*Section 2.* Bulls must be at least 15 months old for service, and when purchased must be in vigorous, well developed condition. Full herd service must not be given excepting with strong, fairly mature bulls and in herds which upon inspection are regarded as in a healthy condition and free from contagious disease.

*Section 3.* The cattle belonging to members of this association shall be grouped in blocks of approximately 60 cows each, and known as Block 1, Block 2, Block 3, etc. The animals in each block, which may consist of two or more herds, shall be located in the same neighborhood, with the bull reasonably convenient to each herd.

*Section 4.* Each bull is to be restricted to service in one block, unless the number of cows in that block becomes so reduced as to justify the use of a sire outside of the block assigned him.

*Section 5.* Each bull in a block is to be placed in charge of one member of the association having a herd in said block, the member to be selected by the executive committee or board of directors.



EXPLANATION

- MEMBERS OF ASSOCIATION.
  - NEAR NEIGHBORS, NOT MEMBERS
- EACH SQUARE REPRESENTS ONE SQUARE MILE

An illustration of the block scheme in bull associations. Reproduced from the Year Book of the United States Department of Agriculture.

*Section 6.* The man to whom is assigned the care of the bull, must provide sanitary and comfortable quarters, which must be first inspected and approved by the executive committee or board of directors. The bull is not to be allowed free run with the cows, and he must be kept in a clean and creditable condition.

*Section 7.* For the care and feeding of the bull, the caretaker shall be paid \$----- per year.



*Section 8.* After 2 years each bull shall be moved from one group to the next in numerical arrangement, as bull in Block 1 to Block 2, that in Block 2 to Block 3, etc. Care shall be taken to avoid in-breeding, as prejudicial to the interests of the association.

*Section 9.* In case of the loss of use of a bull, from any cause, then the association shall promptly secure another sire, thereby not interfering with breeding operations.

*Section 10.* Funds received from service fees or from sales of bulls, shall on or before the first day of January, April, July, or October, be paid over to the Secretary, who in turn will promptly pay over the same to the Treasurer.

*Section 11.* The fee for breeding service shall be \$----- to members, and twice this sum to non-members, provided service is sold to the latter.

*Section 12.* Members of the association in charge of sires are to keep detailed record of all services in private herd books supplied by and owned by the association, and are to submit these books to the Secretary for inspection at least annually.

*Section 13.* Each member of the association shall report to the Secretary prior to February 1, a list of calves dropped in his herd sired by the association bull, also indicating date of calving and sex. All registry and transfer papers are to be kept in the possession of the Secretary, but the caretaker of each bull is to be furnished a clearly written or printed pedigree for four generations, of the sire in his charge, which pedigree is to be placed in a conspicuous place in the stable.

#### EXPENSES ASSOCIATED WITH COMMUNITY BREEDING

The cost associated with community breeding membership depends entirely on the plans involved and the class of animals. One would naturally expect larger expense with horses and cattle, than with sheep or swine. In Wisconsin, where more breeders' associations are found than in any other state, 122 organizations showed annual membership dues and fees ranging from 25 cents to \$3, with \$1 as a rather common fee. The cost will largely depend on the extent to which the members advertise, conduct sales, make cooperative purchases of animals, etc. The ordinary form of association promoting purebreds, has a comparatively low membership fee. The cost with bull clubs runs higher, *on account of the joint ownership of animals*, altho the returns should be correspondingly great. Referring to cost in bull associations, J. G. Winkjer\* makes the following statement.

\*Yearbook of The United States Department of Agriculture, 1916.

“In one association having more than 100 members the original cost to each member was only \$23.00. The members already have had the use of good purebred bulls for 4 years and probably will have their use 6 years longer without other additional cost than maintenance. At an average investment of less than \$25.00 a member, another association with more than fifty members has had the use of good purebred bulls for more than 7 years, with prospects of being able to use them for 3 or 4 years more.”

There are also communities where men cooperate to secure the ownership of a high priced, superior male for use in a few purebred herds located within a rather compact and convenient neighborhood. These men, for example, may purchase a bull for say \$1000, dividing the cost equally among themselves. This money is paid into the treasury, and the contributors have the use of the bull by special agreement, with no fees for service, excepting a nominal one to the keeper to cover cost of feed and care. Whenever the owners think desirable the bull is sold and the funds derived from the sale are used to offset the purchase price. If there is a financial loss, this is equally borne by the parties to the agreement.

#### ASSISTANCE IN ORGANIZING BREEDING ASSOCIATIONS

The Animal Husbandry Department of the Ohio State University desires to render any assistance possible in organizing breeding associations in Ohio, and invites correspondence on this subject.