THE WELFARE OF CATTLE ON FLORIDA PASTURES

R. B. BECKER AND J. R. HENDERSON

LIVESTOCK in the bluegrass region of Kentucky, the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, and parts of England are world famous for their excellence from many standpoints. Animals thrive in those regions because the forages grown on the soils contain optimum amounts of the nutrients essential to the welfare of animal life. In other regions, the development of livestock depends somewhat upon the degree that the soil has limited the level of some essential element in the forages utilized as feed. The fact that fertility of the land limited the thrift of livestock in any particular region was recognized generations ago by the early agricultural writers.

In 1776, John Mills attributed to mismanagement more than to infertility the stinted size of some of the farm stock of England. William Aiton associated the kind of soil with thrift of the cattle of southwestern Scotland.

Even on the Island of Jersey, LeCouteur, Secretary of the Royal Jersey Agricultural and Horticultural Society, observed that, “In so small a spot as Jersey, it is difficult to cross the breed entirely—a great step towards it is gained by crossing cattle bred in the low rich pastures with those of the exposed hills on the western or northern coasts: these being smaller, finer boned, of a more hardy constitution, and feeding on a short rich bite, impart strength of constitution and hardihood to the larger and more delicate animals of the sheltered low grounds.”

Two of the leading authorities on livestock a century ago were David Low, Professor of Agriculture in the University of Edinburgh, and William Youatt of England. Low wrote that, “It is upon the supply of food that the size of the animals seems mainly to depend. Wherever food is supplied in abundance, the ox becomes enlarged in bulk; and wherever food is deficient, whatever be the nature of the climate, his size becomes less.”

Youatt wrote in the same vein as follows: “The breeds of cattle, as they are now found in Great Britain, are almost as various as the soil of the different districts, or the fancies of the breeders. . . . Thence it resulted, that in Devon, in Sussex, in Wales, and in Scotland, the cattle have been the same from time immemorial; while in all the eastern coast, and through every district of England, the breed of cattle degenerated, or lost its original character; it consisted of animals brought from every neighboring and some remote districts, mingled in every possible variety, yet conforming itself to the soil and climate.”

The above-mentioned writers dealt with areas usually considered adequate for the production of cattle. At the other extreme, on def-