

[To the Editor [on Treating Cattle Lice]]

Date: 1791/03/01

Publication Format

Print

Type

Veterinary Medicine

Symptoms

lice

cattle lice

Ingredients

birch bark

maple bark

cod liver oil

tobacco

Places

Barrington

Nova Scotia

Source: Nova Scotia Magazine

Institution: Nova Scotia Archives | **Source Origin:** Nova Scotia Newspapers on Microfilm | **Reference:** Microfilm Reels 8062, 8063

Description

A letter dated 24 February 1791 detailing the causes and dangers of lice in calves followed by two remedies for preventing and eliminating infestations. Vol. 4 (March 1791) nn.143. Microfilm Reel 8063.

Transcription

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NOVA-SCOTIA MAGAZINE

Sir,

THROUGH your useful Magazine, I could wish to offer to the inspection of our farmers in this province a few remarks I have made since my residence in this country, relative to the raising of calves, of which not a few (more particularly among those inhabitants denominated old settlers, and living in the western parts of this colony) have died with that pernicious vermin *lice*. As the best way to stop an evil is to prevent its existence, so the most certain method of raising calves free from lice is to prevent their getting them. We naturally then recur to the manner in which they get infested with these vermin, which is by letting the calves go into the woods with the other cattle to browse, in the winter season, where they rub themselves against the fir and spruce trees. It is well known to those who have made the least observation, that those trees, as soon as they die, (whether by fire, which has over-run the woods formerly, or by natural or other accidental causes, is now no matter) between the bark and trunk of the tree, become immediately inhabited with those vermin, which, from the length of time they stay there, eat away and shatter the bark, and of course is penetrated by the rain, which makes it easily come off with the friction of the cattle rubbing themselves against the tree, and the live naturally fall with the shivers of the bark on the back and sides of the cattle, where they find a warm retreat in the hair from the severity of the weather. The old cattle, whose constitutions are much stronger than the calves, carry their lice with them through the winter, and drop them off as they shed their coats in

the spring, but the yearlings immediately become diseased, more particularly as the lice crawl towards the head, as they soon get in through the ears. If this then is really the case (which from experience in not permitting my youngest cattle to go

into the woods before they are a year old, and which have never been troubled with those insects, except a few they get from the other cattle when they return out of the woods) as I am fully of opinion that it is, I should recommend their being kept at home the winter before they are a year old, and let the boughs of birch and maple trees, with the buds, be cut and brought to them. But lest many may suppose this too much trouble, or they think my observations are futile, and their calves may get troubled with these vermin, I could wish to inform them of a method to kill them effectually, and without risk, unless too much be applied -- which is to rub the ridge along the back with a light streak of liver (codish) oil, and tie a flannel rag, with this oil on it, round the neck of the beast; or a more safe method is, to wash the back of the creature with tobacco steeped in water, or lye made of tobacco ashes.

Should my remarks be of any service in promoting the growth of cattle in this province, by preventing their death with lice, when young, I shall feel sufficiently pleased in having been of service to my fellow-farmers, in contributing to their wealth, and remain, Sir,

Your very humble servant,
A NOVA-SCOTIAN.

Barrington, Feb. 24, 1791.

To the Editor [on Treating Cattle Lice] recipe from Early Modern Maritime Recipes:
<https://emmr.lib.unb.ca/recipes/73>