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# CONDIMENTAL STOCK FOODS AND PROPRIETARY REMEDIES

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# CONDIMENTAL STOCK FOODS AND PROPRIETARY REMEDIES

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Judging from the many inquiries that come to the Iowa Agricultural Experiment Station about the composition and merits of "condimental stock foods" and "tonics," great quantities of these products are purchased by Iowa farmers and feeders. Their sale is built up largely by alluring advertisements, by the use of "testimonials," and by extravagant promises which in some cases cannot possibly be fulfilled. Without question, the consuming public pays out for these various secret proprietary preparations many times what they are actually worth.

The Chemistry Section of the Iowa Agricultural Experiment Station believes that the *indiscriminate* purchase and use of such secret preparations as these "condimental stock foods" and "tonics" should be discouraged. They should be bought only with caution. The preparations on the market differ very widely in character and are a source of perplexity to the inspecting authorities, and it is difficult, therefore, to draw the line between those genuine and reliable preparations that possess some good medicinal or condimental value and those rank swindles which are sold under fraudulent claims. However, it would be unfair to make the sweeping statement that all these preparations are dangerous and worthless just because they are sold under proprietary names. Some of them may contain well known medicinal and condimental substances which are valuable when properly used. At the same time, the medicinal value of such substances depends almost entirely upon their use in the proper amount, and that fact is frequently overlooked by the manufacturers of proprietary remedies. In general, it is a good plan to avoid using ready made remedies unless they are well known, reliable preparations which have been tried out and found good.

## CHEAP INGREDIENTS COMPRISE BULK OF MANY STOCK FOODS

Altho condimental stock foods seldom contain substances that would harm live stock, they are frequently made up of very common and cheap ingredients, such as common salt, sulfur, charcoal, alum, copperas, epsom salts, glauber's salts, and the like. These are mixed and put in packages, given a proprietary name, and then sold at prices enormously in excess of their real value. The striking thing about many of these preparations is the amount of common salt they contain; it varies from one pound to as high as 85 pounds in each 100 pounds of the mixture. This explains why live stock relish many of these compounds and why they are eager after more after they have once tasted them.

At best, mixtures of this kind are only conditioners and do not possess any real curative properties. Considering the actual value of the ingredients, therefore, the manufacturers are not justified in charging such exorbitant prices for their proprietary products.

So-called "general-conditioners" may at times be used to advantage in keeping hogs in a healthy condition, but then it is usually advisable to use the formulas recommended by the various experiment stations. Farmers will save money by buying the ingredients at ordinary prices at any drug store and mixing them on the farm. For example, it is not necessary to buy expensive conditioners or remedies to keep hogs free from worms, which seems to be one of the principal reasons for buying proprietary mixtures. The use of santonin according to the formula published by the veterinary section of the Iowa Agricultural Experiment Station in Circular 14, has again and again given satisfactory results at small cost. The Animal Husbandry Section of the Iowa Agricultural Experiment Station also recommends that to prevent their infection from worms, hogs be given free access to such minerals and condiments as air-slaked lime, charcoal, slack coal, powdered sulfur, copperas, glauber's salts, salsoda, common salt, these being allowed in free-choice style. These will help, tho they are not sure preventives of trouble any more than the many secret remedies so widely advertised.

#### MANNER OF SELLING CONDEMNNS MANY PREPARATIONS

The chief evil of the condimental stock food and tonic industry is not so much in the preparations themselves as in the falsity and extravagance of the claims made for some of them and the manner in which some of them are sold. Some companies put out elaborate advertisements which announce that their preparations will work wonders with stock. Often what seems to be a refund guarantee is held out as an inducement to buy. The sale is then frequently based on a more or less complicated agreement or contract, signed before a notary public, and so worded that the purchaser may be compelled to pay for the goods whether he gets results or not, in spite of the fact that the advertising and the salesman promised, "no results, no pay." The refund guarantee is in such cases merely a scheme for obtaining the purchaser's money by false promises and by tangling the transaction up in legal technicalities. This is the basic evil of the stock food business and the point at which it is most subject to attack.

It is true that licenses for the manufacture and sale of these condimental, patent, proprietary, or trademarked stocks foods and tonics are issued by the state dairy and food commissioner, thus placing a certain stamp of legitimacy upon them, but that also brings them under the close supervision of the state dairy and food commissioner. There are special laws regulating the sales of these products and their enforcement is in the hands of the commissioner. All complaints regarding condimental stock foods and tonics and similar preparations should be made to the state dairy and food commissioner, at Des Moines. His office will make private reports on the com-

position of stock foods when samples are submitted, on the payment of a fee of \$1.00 to cover actual cost of the analysis. Farmers and feeders who contemplate the purchase of condimental stock foods would do well to consult with the state officials before they enter into any contract for buying.

### *ANALYSIS OF STOCK FOODS*

The requests for information about these various stock foods received by the Iowa Agricultural Experiment Station at Ames are usually accompanied by samples for analysis. In the case of the concentrated feed stuffs, like cottonseed meal, for example, the analysis is not difficult. The origin of the material is known and it is merely a question of determining the feeding value by determining the percentage of crude protein, and also, if necessary, crude fat and crude fiber. In the case of analysis to determine the composition and value of proprietary products, however, it is difficult to discover the make-up of the mixture and its true medicinal value without much time and labor. The complete identification of the ingredients may be impossible when drugs are used which do not contain substances of well marked chemical characteristics. In many cases a manufacturer can truthfully say that the composition of his remedy cannot be discovered by analysis.

However, it is not the regular duty of the Iowa Agricultural Experiment Station to make these analyses. It does make them from time to time, however, whenever it can be of assistance to the farmers of the State and whenever such service is likely to be of general benefit, but it should be remembered that the state law says that this work shall be done by the state dairy and food department. That department is officially charged with the duty of enforcing the state food laws and the laws governing the sale of feeding stuffs. It is also entrusted with the work of making all inspections and analyses of food stuffs coming under the law.

In this connection the following quotation from a recent bulletin of the Iowa Dairy and Food Commission is of interest:

“If you have reason to suspect any delivery to concentrate feeding stuffs, get in touch with this department (Iowa Dairy and Food Commission, State House, Des Moines) without delay. We will sample the shipment in question and institute such proceedings as may be necessary. Reimbursement to the extent of the deficiency may be recovered by the cooperation of this department. This service is given without charge.”

All questions regarding the composition of feeding materials of any kind should therefore be addressed to the Iowa Dairy and Food Commission, Des Moines, Iowa.