

LIVE STOCK.

Some of England's Utility Sheep.

Editor "The Farmer's Advocate":

The Hampshire Down is one of the most popular and widely-distributed breeds of sheep in Southern England. Its crosses also seem in great favor with sheep breeders and the reason for this is probably to be found in the fact that they impart size as well as fine quality to their progeny. Large, coarse sheep are thus improved by the introduction of Hampshire Down blood, while small breeds yield finer lambs in consequence of the crossing. The Hampshire Down was most likely the result of crossing the old Wiltshire white-faced horned sheep and the Berkshire Knot with the Southdown. The distinguishing characteristics of the Hampshire are black faces and legs, Roman noses, and lacking horns. The heads have a heavy appearance, and the sheep are of the large type, but lower set than the Shropshire Downs. At twelve months old they turn out about 80 lb. to 100 lb. carcass weight.

It is a breed very suitable for the close-folding system, as is so largely the practice on big arable farms. There is one disadvantage: they are very liable to foot-rot on clay soils. In favor of the Hampshire much can therefore be said, and they should show to the best advantage on dry, light soils, where the folding system is the general practice.

The earliness of maturity of improved Hampshire sheep as a breed is well-known, and also the merits of the system of feeding which can produce it. The three factors necessary for its achievement are, first the breed, second the mode of feeding, and third the peculiar soil and climate of a southern country adapted for the growth of summer fodder, as well as of good root crops. To bring out a 12 stone lamb at eight months old is quite possible in the case of this breed.

It is necessary to feed the dam liberally, in order that her milk may be both plentiful and rich, and with this end in view she should be given an allowance of 1 lb. of cake per day. This, together with hay and turnips or swedes, constitutes the diet which is continued for at least ten weeks, or until such time as it is considered advisable to lower the amount of cake or corn given to the ewes, so as to increase that given to the lambs. Both ewes and lambs should be comfortably housed at night in a well-littered and well-sheltered pen, and should have daily access to a fold of turnips, and receive their cake and hay regularly.

The Shropshire in many qualities resembles the Hampshire, but it can easily be distinguished by its wool-covered head. Shropshires are heavier than Southdowns, both as regards carcass and fleece, while the mutton runs the Southdown close as regards quality. They are the result of crossing the old Morfe Common breed with Leicester, Cotswold, and finally with the Southdown. The sheep are very hardy, and seem easily acclimatized, and this is one of the chief reasons why they are so suitable for Scotland, where sheep of the Down type are required. The chief characteristics are dark brown faces without speckles, short dark ears, head and cheeks covered with short wool and legs black. The Shropshire is to be preferred where mutton of good quality is desired, and the Southdown is not found large enough. The ewes are also very prolific, and the rams especially good for crossing, owing to their general adaptability and prepotence. They produce a goodly fleece of high quality wool.

The Lincolnshire Long Wool is the largest breed of sheep in the British Islands. It produces an enormous weight of fleece which is of fine quality. A Lincoln fleece has been known to weigh 30 lb., while hog fleeces sometimes average 14 lbs. each. The original Lincoln was greatly improved by crossing with the new Leicester. Its chief points are faces and legs always white. Long wool and sheep of very large size, wethers sometimes being 25 lb. to 30 lb. per quarter. They are mostly seen on the Lincoln Wolds and neighboring counties. The sheep are almost immune from foot-rot and thus the breed is to be recommended on wet land, and soils liable to foot-rot. They also stand exposure well, and can be depended upon for heavy lambs and plenty of wool.

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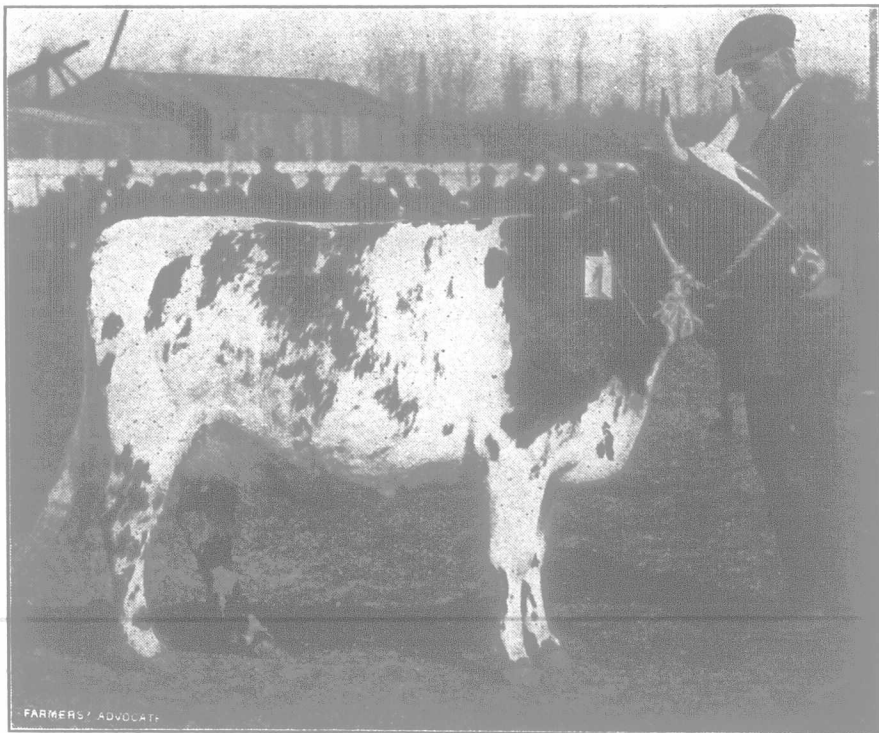
G. T. BURROWS.

Do something practical towards better roads when at the annual road work this season. Put on real gravel, not sand and stones, or better yet give a good application of broken stone.

On Dehorning Cattle.

Editor "The Farmer's Advocate":

This is the best time of year to dehorn cattle. Nearly all agricultural papers are advising the use of Caustic Potash when calves are about three days old to prevent the growth of horns, but the writer found that in his case at least, this method defeated the purpose. Cows that have been dehorned when calves, use their heads almost as viciously as if they had not been dehorned, and although they cannot tear one another, they frequently do serious damage. They are liable too to be hard on fences, throwing off poles or batons and breaking down wire. If however their horns are allowed to grow till they are coming two years of age, and are then removed the cow is practically quieted for life. As yearlings they are learning that their horns are their means of defence, but they have not yet been able to do any injury. When their horns are taken off at this age they are completely defenceless, and are hardly ever troublesome. The writer has been dehorning regularly at this age for some years. About fifteen years ago we first dehorned cattle. A valuable mare had been hooked, and the experiment was the result. Of ten cows milking we dehorned nine, the remaining one was old and was besides very quiet. That evening some of them did not eat all their feed, and they were off in milk from two to nine pounds each. The next morning they all took their feed as usual and were off from four to nine pounds each. The following evening all except one were up to the old standard and inside of a week we were getting from twenty to thirty pounds more milk daily from our ten cows than we had been before they were dehorned. That



A Nice Type.

Ayrshire cow, winner of championship and the Derby at Kilmarnock, 1914.

Spring we used the Caustic Potash on our calves, as we did also for the next two years. The poll cows gave us considerable trouble and we attribute the loss of some premature calves to the fighting of the cows. Since that time we have dehorned regularly and with the best of results. If done at this time of year, the cut is healed before the flies become troublesome.

P. E. I.

THEODORE ROSS.

Docking Lambs.

In recent issues several contributed articles have appeared relating to the methods practiced by sheepmen in docking their lambs. No doubt there are thousands of lambs in the country yet to be docked and for those who may be called upon to attend to the operation we may say we know of no better plan than to stand the lamb up on all four of his legs with an attendant holding him while the operator cuts the tail from below upwards, with a sharp knife. All that is necessary is to double the tail down over the knife and make the cut close enough up to the back of the lamb. By this method the knife slips between the vertebrae and there is far less injury than where the old method of laying the tail on a board and cutting it off with a chisel is practiced. This often drives the chisel or knife, if the latter be used, directly through one of the vertebrae causing considerable pain and set-back to the lamb. We would urge sheep breeders not to neglect the practice of docking their lambs. Do it while the lambs are young, from one to two weeks of age.

Shearing Sheep.

Editor "The Farmer's Advocate":

Unlike most farm animals the sheep, with its outer covering, has a source of revenue which goes a long way in paying for its keep during the winter. The ewe flock, while providing nourishment for the growing foetus, have been steadily adding length and weight to their fleeces as well, and in the spring the removal and sale of this, which has provided warmth and protection throughout the winter, brings a handsome return.

In all the large sheep ranching countries, where flocks of several thousand are kept, the shearing season is one of the busiest. All the work must be accomplished in a short time for each particular district, hence, in many cases, the work has been handed over to experts. These men do the work by contract or charge a flat sum-for-each animal. They begin in the earlier districts, travelling to the colder sections as the season opens up. Large shearing sheds are often erected for the purpose of shearing and storing of wool. Every precaution is taken to insure quickness, cleanliness and thoroughness in the work, hence we find that the intelligent methods practiced at shearing time in such countries as Australia, New Zealand and Great Britain add greatly to the quality and price of their wool when placed for sale in the large wool markets of the world.

Conditions in the Dominion of Canada are very different. Small flocks of ten to one hundred in number are scattered here and there throughout the country, some sections having more, others less. Very little thought has been put into any particular division of the sheep industry, practically no thought whatever into shearing. The work has been performed in a careless manner, a few men being efficient in the work, but the large majority unskilled, many farmers with a small flock of ten to fifteen ewes shearing on the ground, others in a stall of the cow stable, hence our wool is contaminated at this time with materials that might easily be avoided. While it is true that our conditions will not allow us to undertake such elaborate buildings, as those countries where sheep alone are kept, however, there are principals which apply either in a large or small way.

Where the custom of having the ewe lambs on grass is followed, shearing usually takes place before the real hot weather sets in. Some men prefer to delay shearing until rather late, hoping to gain in weight of wool

owing to an increase in oil or yolk. There is little to be gained by delay because considerable wool is likely to pull out and be lost, and, moreover, sheep lose flesh very rapidly if not shorn before hot weather arrives. There is also danger of the lambs eating some of the wool, which is likely to result in the formation of wool balls and consequently death. Good dry weather should be selected for shearing. If the flock has been washed time should be given for the wool to become thoroughly dry. It is always advisable to tag the ewes before shearing. Cleaner wool is assured as well as cleanliness to the operator. Shears used for this purpose should be cleaned before being used for other work. No attempt should be made to remove the dirty wool or tags with a shearing machine. The plates are likely to be broken or notched and the sheep cut as well.

The old-time method of shearing with the hand shears is rapidly giving place to the shearing machine. Less skill is needed to operate this machine with the same efficiency as the hand shears. There is little danger of cutting unless carelessly handled. The ends of the teat may be cut off or serious cuts inflicted, but this should not be tolerated under any consideration. The position in which the sheep is held while the various parts of the body are being shorn can be best learned by watching a skilled workman at work. The legs of a sheep should never be tied while being shorn. Experience enables the operator to place the sheep in a proper position for shearing every part of the body, and one in which the operator, if efficient, has perfect control of the animal. There is no animal that submits itself