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EDITORIAL.

Show Your Stock.

Visitors to the fairs judge of the popularity and comparative usefulness of the breeds of live stock, in all classes, by the number and quality of each on exhibition. A large display of animals of high-class excellence at these events is one of the best advertisements of a breed that can possibly be made, and every breeder is, therefore, interested in a creditable exhibit of his favorites. The idea evidently entertained by many breeders, that unless they can make a large display and figure prominently in the competition for herd and flock prizes it is better not to show at all, is a grave mistake. Such a course leaves the field to a few and often results in a meager representation of a breed, leaving the impression on the public mind that the breed is losing ground or is at least lacking in enthusiastic admirers, and such impression detracts from the demand and affects trade adversely, especially in so far as the smaller breeders are concerned.

A perusal of the catalogues of leading British exhibitors shows that even wealthy and prominent breeders not infrequently enter a single animal, or at most a half dozen, in the class for the breed in which they are interested, and consider it an honor and an advertisement worth all it costs to win even a second or third prize or a commendation. It is certainly more satisfactory and more sensible and creditable to show one really good animal, or a few in the best of condition, than to bring out a large number in a half-prepared state, for then, if one fails to get into the prize list, he may not be ashamed of his exhibit and will learn from the experience in what points of excellence or of preparation he is lacking, and will be in a position to more skillfully prepare and successfully compete the next time he comes out. Indeed, this is the only way in which a man of moderate means can measure the quality of his stock with that of others, for however high an opinion he may have of his own at home, he is liable to be surprised by their shortcomings when seen in first-class company in the show-ring, but if wisely used the experience may prove a profitable education to him.

As a rule, and in most classes of stock, it is a mistake to limit the period of preparation to a few weeks or even to a few months. The best time to begin to prepare for the next year's show season is at the close of the last. Not that it is wise to feed heavily the whole year, but the selection of the animals intended for exhibition should be made early and their preparation be gradual, proper training and exercise being given to keep them improving in every respect, and if they are found to fail of responding satisfactorily to the necessary treatment, others may be substituted before it is too late to give them the benefit of the needed preparation. There are, however, some classes, such as the dairy breeds of cattle, which even at this date may be successfully prepared for the early shows, as in their case a high condition of flesh is not necessary, and would, indeed, handicap them in the competition; but they must be housed during hot days and receive the feeding, sheeting and grooming necessary to give them the gloss and the handling quality of skin and hair which counts for so much in a close comparison. Much also depends upon their training to walk gracefully and to stand properly in order to show

to the best possible advantage. These may appear to be trifling points, but in a close competition they may turn the scale and mean all the difference between the first and a lower place in the rating. The showman should study the attitudes of the animal he handles and show it for all it is worth, remembering that in this as in everything in connection with fitting for exhibition, what is worth doing is worth doing well.

Another point which is worthy of being emphasized is that the interest and success of our exhibitions and the prestige of our country as the breeding-ground for high-class stock depends largely on the character of the live stock displayed at the leading shows, and for this reason, if for no other, the men who have the stock should take a broad and patriotic view of the question and be prepared to make some sacrifices, if need be, for the general good, and should see that the products of the country are adequately represented.

Changes During Ripening.

As plants approach maturity and seeds are being formed, great changes take place in the distribution of those constituents which afterward serve a valuable purpose in the nutrition of animals. Chemically speaking, the principal elements that go to make plants are oxygen, nitrogen, hydrogen, carbon, sulphur, phosphorus and potash. The three latter, although essential, are not found in great quantity. Nearly half the dry combustible matter of plants consists of carbon, and with oxygen and hydrogen it forms the starches, sugars, and fats. Nitrogen, which is obtained principally from the air, is only found in the combustible portion of plant bodies to the extent of about four per cent. Hydrogen and oxygen alone form water.

After germination a tiny plumule comes forth, and as rapidly as climatic conditions will admit, the plant aims to produce root, stem and leaf, with, finally, a flower and seed. That period known as the grand period of growth is the time when plant tissue is being constructed most rapidly and when the greatest drafts are being made upon the fertility of the soil. At that time the plant is storing up in various combinations the different elements mentioned. When cereal crops reach full bloom they contain as much nitrogen and potash as is to be found in the mature crop. The assimilation of phosphoric acid, however, continues much later. As the seed begins to form, starch albuminoids (nitrogenous matter), phosphoric acid and potash are carried from the root, leaf and stem to be stored up in the seed. So it is that in seasons favorable to the maturing of seed the straw at harvest will be found quite exhausted. Likewise, during rainy harvests, the translocation of these materials does not go on so readily, and as a result the straw possesses a higher and the grain a lower feeding value than if desirable conditions had existed.

In the light of these facts, it may be readily seen why variations in the composition of our feeding stuffs are met with. A table showing the percentage composition of oats, for example, cannot be taken as a sure guide in all cases. In fully-matured grain the variation will not be found considerable. Any which may exist will be traceable to differences in soil or the season of ripening. The effect of season is best seen in the case of barley. Immature ripening, caused by cold, wet, or extremely dry periods, produces a

grain high in nitrogenous substances, poorer in starch, and, consequently, low in value for malting purposes. For use as a stock food, a grain high in nitrogen is often desirable, but when a relatively high percentage is obtained only at the expense of other substances, almost or equally as valuable, no gain can be said to result.

In the case of such immature crops as corn fodder or meadow grass, the composition depends upon the stage of maturity at which the plant was cut and to some extent upon the character of the manuring. As a general law in this connection, chemists have stated that as the plant matures the proportion of water, nitrogenous matter, potash and phosphoric acid diminishes, while the proportion of starchy substances largely increases.

In drawing conclusions, farmers should be assisted by these considerations in determining the proper time to cut their crops. It is well known that many weeds if pulled while in bloom ripen seeds with sufficient vitality to again reproduce. A plant of any of our grains, too, if cut while in flower and kept with the stem in water will ripen seed, though the quality will be inferior. The statement is sometimes made that grain cut a few days before being completely ripe gives a brighter sample than if left until complete ripeness is attained. While this may to some extent be true, it can only be had at the expense of plumpness. When the weather is dry, grain withers up quickly in the shock, and as the water within the plant body is evaporated, the translocation of materials from stem and leaf to head must soon be checked.

Government Road Grant.

Through reports received from different parts of the Province of Ontario, we learn that a few counties are not likely to accept their share of the million-dollar grant made by the Provincial Government for road improvement. The chief objection appears to be because in accepting it they are required to add a supplementary grant of two dollars for every one supplied from the provincial funds. It is, indeed, regrettable that county councils should so stand in their own light in this matter. One thing that the average farmer greatly needs is better facilities for placing his products upon the market. Thoughtful, unselfish men are alive to this need. A wave of road-making reform is sweeping over the country. The grant has been made; and it is within the power of the taxpayers to say whether they are to participate in the benefits of a fund, their share of which they are compelled to pay whether they decide to construct permanent roadways or not.

The Argentine Cattle Question.

Speaking at the luncheon in connection with the show of the Suffolk (Eng.) Agricultural Association, recently, Hon. Mr. Hanbury, Chairman of the British Board of Agriculture, said he had, at the present moment, rather a difficult question to decide in regard to the importing of Argentine cattle. He intended to take such precautions in regard to Argentine cattle as were necessary in the interests of the British farmer and consumer. The supply of cattle from America was falling off, and he looked forward to the day when Argentina would be a great source of England's meat supply. Therefore, every precaution must be taken to prevent disease being imported either into Great Britain or the Argentine Republic.