

Breeding and Management of Swine.

In the ordinary course of management, a farmer keeps one or two breeding sows because his dairy will do no more; but if crops are grown purposely for swine, a different system may be adopted. The farmer who would breed pigs profitably, and in a systematic way, says a writer in an English Exchange, must keep a proper number of sows in order to breed many pigs; and this will entail a careful provision of crops proper for supporting this stock. As the most necessary of crops may be mentioned barley, peas, clover, tares, potatoes and mangels. It is generally allowed that sows are more healthy running out at grass than in any other way they can be kept. Mangels may be kept all through the summer if properly managed, and form first-class food for all sorts of pigs. In choosing the time for breeding it should be borne in mind that the time should be so arranged that there never be a long expensive time for rearing the young pigs before they are put to the staple food of roots, etc. For this the months of March and August are the most suitable.

The sow chosen for breeding purposes should be herself of good size, if fine pigs are to be produced, and the age should not be under 10 or 12 months old. Frequently sows are used under this age, but the result is generally that they become stunted in their growth, and do not acquire sufficient strength for breeding. Gilts should not be selected for breeding purposes that have less than twelve teats, for each youngster, it may be noticed, in sucking, selects one for himself.

Occasionally one hears of sows eating their offspring. This is sometimes the result of the sow being upset, and also the reason may be found in the youngsters themselves. The side teeth in some litters are longer and sharper than in others. When this is the case, when the pigs suck they bite and scratch the sow's teats, which brings on inflammation, causing the sow to get rough with the youngsters. If once a sow bite a little pig and draw blood, she will begin to eat them. To prevent all this, take the young pigs at a few hours old away in a hamper, where the sow will not hear them, and pinch these long teeth out with a pair of pincers.

The sow should be fed moderately during the first few days, after which time, food calculated to increase the milk supply may be given. As soon as possible the young pigs should be taught to feed. A little milk in shallow troughs and broken corn thrown among the clean litter will help them on. The exercise of hunting for the grain is beneficial to the growth.

The pigs will be old enough to castrate at eight weeks old, and to wean a week later.

During the time sows are suckling, they should always have as much as they will eat, or the pigs will suffer. Let them be always perfectly clean and well littered. This insures the health of the pigs, and, at the same time, makes a lot of the best manure.

FARM.

Rural Mail Delivery.

It has been with a great deal of interest that I have read, from time to time, the articles written on rural mail delivery in your valuable paper, and I regret that more of the farmers in the country do not give their views concerning such an important question, as I think one of the best and quickest ways we can obtain it is by keeping it constantly before the public.

Some time ago I noticed in your paper the report that our Postmaster-General had announced that he did not think the country was ready for rural mail delivery, but I do not agree with him in this particular point, for I think that if he took a vote of all the farmers throughout the country, he would find that the large majority would be in its favor. Undoubtedly there would be a great number of difficulties in the way, and it would involve a considerable expenditure of money at the outset, but if at least one-third of the small post offices and mail routes were done away with, and each township have say one or two central post offices with daily mail routes to correspond with the amount of mail handled, considerable money could be saved, which would somewhat lessen the expense.

Within a radius of twelve or fifteen miles of almost any town or city, to-day, there are on an average twenty or twenty-five post offices, some of which no more than pay the cost of maintaining them, which emphasizes my statement that fewer of them, with delivered mail, would at least increase the mail handled by one-half as much as at the present time, as the farmers would be enabled to take more daily papers, and would get an account of any important event going on without having to wait a whole week before hearing of it. This would put him on an equal standing with his city brother, who at the present time has the advantage of him in this respect.

If more of our farmers would write on this subject through your valuable paper, also have it discussed at the Farmers' Institute meetings, I think that our Postmaster-General could be induced in time to comply with our demands.

Peterboro County, Ont.

SUBSCRIBER.

Educating the Farm Dog.

One subject in the "Farmer's Advocate" that has not been treated as fully as I would like to see, is the educating or training of collie dogs. Opinions differ as to what is meant by the word "trained." Some people have the idea that if a dog will chase the cows at the word "sic," and come back when called, that is all that is required, but as I understand the term, it implies a great deal more. It calls for a dog that will, when told, go to the pasture, circle around the cows, herd them, and bring them on a steady walk to the barn. One that at the command of his master, will sweep around the head of the herd and reverse the course of every animal as many times as is desired; will put trespassing swine off the premises, and also in winter, when the stable doors are open during the cleaning operation, watch lest the cows come in. I will try to give a few suggestions which may aid in the higher education of a dog.

I would say, select an active, affectionate pup with a considerate countenance, or in other words, one that will watch with earnestness every move and every act of its master. After he is the proper age the teaching begins. The proper age largely depends upon the nature of the dog, his ability to take care of himself, and his eagerness to work. In most cases it should not begin before he is six months old, unless he is blessed with a never-failing supply of "snap," because if he gets a kick when he is too young, it may ruin him.

It is a hard matter to lay down hard and fast rules for the teaching of dogs, but I would say, in the first place, gain his confidence, keep it, and give him to understand that you are his friend and protector. The next thing is, keep your temper and exercise patience. Next, I would say, keep the dog to yourself. Allow no one to use him, for no dog can serve two masters. Keep him as your constant companion. This will encourage him to come back promptly when his tasks are finished, and also be at hand when wanted, instead of running around the country. I like to see the dog that will cry if for a minute he loses his master. Feed him liberally and regularly after your own meals, in order to teach him regular habits. Always see that he is tied securely at night, and when you go away where you do not allow him to go.

Now, with regard to teaching your dog to drive cows, I would say, first procure a piece of one-quarter inch rope about twenty feet long. Attach this to his neck, and say to him, "Let us go and get the cows, Carlo."

Always give your orders in plain English, speaking as distinctly as possible, and always using the same words for a certain act, for it is by combining the words with the act that he learns what is wanted.

As you go toward the pasture, let the dog go ahead of you, and when you reach the cows go out around them to the last one, gather them together and start them homeward, always accompanying him, and do not be too anxious to see him work alone. See that he follows the cows, ahead of you. Make him keep to his place. If one should lag, say to him, "Move her up, Carlo," (or whatever his name may be) and help him. If he succeeds, caress him; tell him that he has done right. Do not be too exact, and never play with him. Repeat this every day for at least two months. By this time, if he has learned well and proved himself trustworthy, you may send him alone. The first few times have the cows close, or, better, go with him nearly to the cows, then send him for them, each time making the distance a little longer, until he is able to go the whole way alone. Always remember to pat him for his labor, and say "Well done, Carlo." But, on the other hand, if he disobeys, give a short scolding, and see the task is properly done before you release him. Never whip if you can avoid it. To a sensitive dog a scolding is sufficient. But if you do, be sure to hold him until you have made friends. Keep the confidence of your dog, and make his work enjoyable. If at any time after he becomes careless, resort to the rope. Going with him a few times will bring him back to his place. Always help him out of difficult places, never allowing him to become defeated or discouraged. This has been the trouble with too many of our promising young dogs. Learn one thing well before starting another.

Now you have taught him to bring the cows alone from the pasture, and drive them when you are with him, the next step is to teach him to get around ahead of them when they are running away from you. When taking the young cattle to pasture, attach the rope as before, and say to him, "Get around ahead, Carlo," at the same time running with him around ahead of the drove. Repeat this a few times, first one way, and then the other, (the word, of course, always accompanying the act), until he learns what is wanted; and then use him in this way every time when turning from the lane into the pasture.

It is also necessary to teach the dog to watch gates, doors, etc. To do this, tie him to an open doorway with cows or swine outside, and place some hay or grain at the door. The stock will naturally come to it, and as they approach say to him "Watch them, Carlo! Watch them!" If he makes an attempt, caress him, also helping him. After a few times he will learn what is wanted, and will take it upon himself, not needing to be told. I would say, let every boy-owner of a good dog teach it one good trick, but when teaching one, I would suggest the carrying of small baskets, empty pails, etc. In the first

place teach him to carry small sticks, gradually enlarging until he is willing to take a small basket; by and bye he will be able to carry a ten-quart pail. Be sure to have wooden handles on the pails, as the iron bale is hard on his teeth.

With regard to breed of dog, (from my experience) I would advise a pure-bred "Shepherd Collie." They seem to be a good-natured, affectionate, willing class, and this is just what is wanted. COWBOY.

Save the Ashes.

This is about the season when the travelling ash-gatherer begins his rounds among the farmers, collecting the winter's ashes, and giving in return a bar of common soap worth about two cents.

Our cousins across the line evidently understand the value of this fertilizer much better than we do, for they buy enormous quantities of what we throw away each year as almost useless. This fact is shown by the large number of advertisements offering "Canada unleached ashes for sale," to be seen in any of the agricultural papers of the Eastern States. These ashes are used chiefly by the fruit-growers and gardeners, among whom they are very popular, and command high prices. Owing to the fact that the Canadian farmer is gradually waking up to the great waste in selling his ashes from the farm, they are steadily increasing in price, and on account of their popularity they are often above their real value, when the same fertilizing material could be bought cheaper in the form of some one of the potash salts.

The prices in the Eastern States are based upon a standard of six per cent. potash and one and a half phosphoric acid, which at the valuation of six cents per pound (the value given by the Chemist of the Inland Revenue Department at Ottawa in their latest fertilizer report), would make standard ashes worth 45 cents per hundred pounds. Fresh ashes usually exceed the above value. A recent analysis gives 7.10 potash, 1.99 phosphoric acid, and 40 of lime. At the above valuation, and allowing one-quarter of a cent a pound for the lime, which is useful on many soils, especially heavy clays, black peaty ones, and wherever the land is inclined to become acid or sour, the above sample is worth 64 cents per hundred pounds, and can be taken as an average sample of fresh hardwood ashes.

Leached ashes differ in having lost a part of their potash, and are usually considered as being worth about one-half as much as the unleached, their value depending upon the extent of the leaching process.

Wood ashes have a lasting influence upon the soil, the good effects being seen for a number of years. As seen from the above, ashes are valuable chiefly for the potash which they contain, therefore the gain to be derived from their use will depend upon the amount of available potash in the soil, but no farm is so rich in this material but what an application of wood ashes will do good. They are helpful to all impoverished soils, but especially to sandy and peaty land, which is very deficient in potash.

A recent bulletin, No. 93, from the Illinois Experimental Station, gives the results of using potash on a black peaty soil with corn, as an increase from nothing to 72 bushels per acre. Surely we have enough black swampy land in Canada to use all our ashes, without taking into consideration our orchards.

As may be supposed, from their large potash content, ashes are of the greatest value to plants of a woody nature, consequently are one of the best fertilizers for orchards, vineyards and gardens. On leguminous crops, such as peas, beans and clover, they are of great value, and especially on freshly-sown clover fields. They also give good results on corn, potatoes, and meadows.

G. F. MARSH.

"The Daughter's Portion."

We are in receipt of several lengthy communications on the above subject, originally introduced by a letter signed "The Toiler," pointing out the injustice often done to daughters who had labored faithfully for years in building up the home, but were almost, if not entirely, forgotten in the division of the property, while the son or sons got all. Incidentally, a number of side issues were touched upon in the course of the correspondence pro and con. In our judgment the main point of the original letter has been very well sustained, and our space having been taxed beyond its limits for many issues past, we desire to crave the indulgence of our correspondents in having given precedence to more urgent matters. The hot season being now on, further controversy can well be deferred.

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