

In agriculture, an inventory is the same, and it has the same object, but it is more complicated and more difficult to be established than in any manufactory, on account of the great variety of branches carried on in a farm—yet a little reflection may accomplish the end. In any case, it is indispensable; for without a preliminary detailed and minute inventory of his stock, the farmer at the end of the season, could but imperfectly appreciate the result of his works, his means of calculating it being deficient.

Nothing is more variable than the value of farming implements: some articles worth to-day £100, may be worth only £50, after twelve months use with a careless farmer; whereas in other hands they might be worth £90. The value of animals may, in the course of the same period, increase or decrease, according as they are well or ill used and treated. Fields may likewise become worth a higher price in consequence of the improvement of the soil, or a lower one after bad tillage, loss of fences, flood or stagnation of water. Out-houses will undergo greater changes still by repairs, new constructions, tumbling down or disasters, &c., in a word, the materials of a farm are susceptible of so great alterations, that the profit realized in the beginning of an enterprise, is often but apparent; whereas ruin, or at least an immense loss is visible, from the lamentable condition of the materials. On the other hand, wise and clever farmers, skilfully returning to the soil what they have drawn from it, seem to clear no profit, whilst they really are enriching themselves by improving their land, in a way not apparent perhaps to a casual observer, but which is not the less sure.

After what has been said it is manifest, that nothing but a minute detailed inventory will show a farmer at the close of each season his real situation.

It should be divided into the three agricultural departments, in order that the farmer may judge of the modifications undergone by each branch, and charged separately to its account, the interest of the capital allotted to it specially.

Thus the valuation of the animals in the cow-house, may determine the interest of the capital, which should appear in the chapter of expenses of this department, (see cow-house). The valuation of the implements of the dairy, may fix the interest of the capital, representing these implements, which interest, should also be found in the chapter of expenses of the same class (cow-house) and so on for the other branches.

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