

Stock.

Chicago Fat Stock Show.

This, the greatest fat stock show in America, closed on the 20th November. The number of animals was not as great as in previous years. The different breeds represented were Shorthorns, Herefords and Devons, also grades from these breeds. The Shorthorns were not well represented, none of the principal breeders showing any in the pure-bred classes. In fact, most of the Shorthorns that were exhibited were animals which had not been high fed, but were fed and bred much in the ordinary manner. The breeder of the principal herd keeps after a rough fashion, caring only to secure hardy cattle and good feeders.

But the case with the Herefords was very different. The principal breeders of this class had made long and special preparations for the Show, exercising the highest art known to the breeder and feeder.

The Devons shown were of inferior quality and few in number.

The most notable animals at the Show were the Grade Shorthorn steers, "Nell Morris," age, 7 years and 7 months; weight, 3,125; and "Nicholas," said to be four years old; weight, 2,462 lbs. "Sebley," another grade Shorthorn steer, attracted much attention; he showed an average gain per day of 2.54 lbs. since the day of his birth. But, probably, the most notable animal on exhibition was "Conqueror," a grade Hereford, two years old, weighing 1,845 lbs.

First and second prizes were given the various ages of each breed of animals shown. These we will not give, but give a summary of the sweepstakes prizes when all breeds met, and also in the Grade class when crosses from the various breeds were shown.

In grades and crosses there were three classes, viz., a class for 3 and under 4 years, 2 and under 3 years, and 1 and under 2 years. Two prizes were given in each class. The entries in each class numbered from 19 to 22 head. In the first class, 3 and under 4 years, a Shorthorn Grade took first, a Hereford Grade 2nd, and in the class 2 and under 3 years, Shorthorn Grades took both prizes; in the class 1 and under 2 years, a Grade Shorthorn took 1st and a Hereford 2nd.

In the Sweepstakes, where beasts of any blood could compete, there were three classes, divided according to age, as the above classes for grades and crosses were; one prize being given to each class. The entries in each of these classes varied from 14 to 23. All the prizes were won by grade Herefords. The sweepstakes for best cow, in which there were 5 entries, was won by a pure Shorthorn.

The grand sweepstakes and challenge cup for the best beast on the ground, was won by a grade Shorthorn. This cup now belongs to J. H. Graves, having been won two years in succession by him. For this prize there were 58 competitors. Very grave doubts are entertained as to the justice of the last award. From proof, which seems to be substantial, it is believed this honor should have been given to the two-year-old grade Hereford steer "Conqueror."

There were also prizes offered for car-load lots. The classes were divided according to age, as above. All these prizes were won by grade Shorthorns.

For the "heaviest fat steer" there were two prizes offered, both of which were won by grade Shorthorns.

Prizes were given for early maturity; the classes were also divided according to age as above.

In the classes 3 and under 4 years, and 1 and under 2, grade Shorthorn steers won, but for 2 and under 3 years, a grade Hereford won.

Prizes were also given for dressed carcasses, being for the most valuable carcass in proportion to the gross weight. The judges' report on this class is as follows:—

"The three-year-old carcasses were too fat to furnish the most profitable proportion of lean to fat meat in proportion to the weight of the carcass for the consumer, and there would be too much fat to cut to the greatest profit for the butcher. The steers had been fattened too long to get the best results in the way of lean meat, and the forcing process in feeding has had the effect of developing fat too rapidly for the natural growth and development of muscle and lean meat. The undue forcing process in feeding at too early an age, with highly concentrated food, is at the expense of muscle and quantity of the lean meat.

"The Hereford steer awarded the premium had the best-formed and proportioned quarters, and presented the smoothest carcass, with fat more evenly distributed throughout than in the other carcasses. The fat was of a light creamy color, and the lean a bright red, well mixed with fat, and nicely marbled. The grain of meat was not too fine, but of the most desirable texture to insure juicy and highly-flavored meat. This steer would give the greatest proportion of eatable food to the weight of dressed carcass, on account of the thickness and length of loin, with less loss from trimming of fat. He had a larger, better-filled round, and broader and longer back. The hind-quarter was heavier in proportion to the fore-quarter than in the other steers. The steer had the greatest proportion of loin and porterhouse steak, which returns the butcher the greatest profit and the consumer the most desirable meat. The lean and fat meats were better mixed in the plate and brisket. The brisket was smallest in proportion to the weight of carcass.

"The grade Shorthorn steer awarded the premium in the two-year-old class, presented a carcass that would return the butcher the greatest profit and the consumer the most desirable meat of any of the dressed carcasses on exhibition. There was a smaller proportion of fat to lean, and the amount of high-priced meat of the best quality was unusually large, and seldom, if ever, excelled. The steer was in prime condition for the block, the meat nicely marbled, and the loin and tenderloin, in proportion to age, was very large. The grain of meat was finer than in the other carcasses, and the flesh was thicker and more highly-flavored. The round was large and well filled down to gambrel joint, with well-proportioned quarters.

"The best proportioned carcass throughout of any on exhibition, with exceptionally heavy hind-quarters, was the yearling steer (Monroe), a cross-bred Short-horn and Hereford. Considering the age of the animal, the meat was very ripe and of excellent quality. The color was rather too light, owing to the want of age. There was considerable fat in proportion to lean meat, the result of high feeding and want of exercise necessary to develop muscle and lean meat."

THE SHEEP

at this show, though good and in some important points in advance of previous years, was not what it should be, when we consider the magnitude of the interest. A very noteworthy feature was the absence of Merinos and Merino grades, though there are more of these sheep in the United States than all other kinds put together.

The majority of the animals were Cotswolds or Southdowns (the latter being most numerous), and crosses from these two breeds. Both of these classes presented some fine specimens—some of the long-wools being passed by the judges as being too fat for profit to the butcher. Among the grades were some interesting animals. Grades of all classes of animals are those in which the general farmer will find most profit. The higher the grades the better. These grades can be most profitably procured by using pure bred males on our native stock flocks, and herds of great excellence can be obtained by this means, combined with constant and careful weeding, breeding only from the best, discarding all poor specimens. The great interest in the show of sheep at this Fair centered in the slaughter test. None but wethers were slaughtered. This test showed the heaviest percentage of dressed carcass to gross weight was from the Cotswolds, but when the experts came to pass upon "the sheep whose dressed carcass was of the highest market value in proportion to its live weight," the decision was in favor of the Southdowns. In both yearling and two-year olds, as might be expected, the decision was not satisfactory to the long-wool breeders; and while they may have had some reason to find fault with the decision, a large proportion of the visitors seemed to accept the decision of the Committee as correct. The proportionate value of the dressed carcass is not all that should be considered in a profitable slaughtering of sheep. The value of the hide and tallow, though secondary, is by no means an unimportant factor in the final estimate. In these items the showing was against the Southdown, from which the merchantable offal was but little more than one-half the value of that from the Cotswolds. We are pleased to see one of our well-known Canadian breeders, Mr. George Hood, of Guelph, Ont., was the winner of several very important premiums.

THE DISPLAY OF HOGS

was very small, the Berkshires being only noticeable by their absence. The principal prize, viz., the challenge cup, was won by a Poland-China, and now becomes the property of Mr. J. A. Countryman, of Illinois, having won it two years in succession—each year with a Poland-China.

A very commendable feature of this show was the introduction and use of catalogue, which was printed at the opening of the show, and circulated gratuitously each day among the visitors. This catalogue contained the name, age, weight, breed of each animal entered for the show; also name and residence of each owner. Each stall was numbered to correspond with the number of the occupant in the catalogue, and when the animals were brought into the ring each had his number upon him, thus making it much more pleasant and instructive to all than it otherwise could have been.

Care of Cattle in Winter.

The different improved breeds of cattle, however judicious the crosses, would never have been produced had they not been well fed and the recipients of more than ordinary care. And if any of them, whether Short Horn, Hereford, Holstein, Jersey, Guernsey or Ayrshire, were to fall into the hands of some of our farmers, they would soon so deteriorate as to be no better than, even if as good as, our native stock. They could not stand the scant feed of our poor pastures, the cold barns in winter, and the poor hay and fodder which is generally forced upon our native stock while dry in winter, or while they are growing heifers. Much of our native stock might be wonderfully improved if they had the same care and feed which the improved breeds have. These cost high and are owned by the best farmers, who have comfortable stables and give the best feed, whose pastures, if poor, are supplemented with the best of forage, which renders their summer feed even better than the best pastures can produce.

In this connection it might be well to call attention to the winter care of stock. The first thing absolutely necessary is a warm barn. The temperature of the animal has to be kept up to ninety degrees. In a cold barn the heat is rapidly removed, and if butter is to be produced during the winter, it will be found that a rapid removal of heat from the body of the cow will as rapidly remove the butter from the milk; but do not let the temperature of the barn be elevated at the sacrifice of ventilation, for without pure air we cannot have healthy animals. When both comfortably warm and well ventilated barns are given, then we want pure water, and in order to obtain this the cows should not be subjected long to cold and chilly blasts. Still we are decidedly in favor of cold water. It is true it has to be brought up to the temperature of the cow's body, and it requires food to do it, but the cold water has a healthy action on the stomach and digestive organs, and therefore upon the whole is preferable if the barn is warm, but if the barn is below the freezing point, warm water would be much better than cold. The farmer, however, who did not take sufficient care to keep his cattle warm, would not be likely to warm the water given.

We should endeavor to have the feed as near like summer feed as possible; those who have roots for feed come near to this, and if they have mixed other kinds of forage besides corn, such as clover, Hungarian, and rowen; but even with these a little Indian meal, shorts or linseed meal will not only increase the quantity of butter but also its quality. A few mangels or sugar beets, with two quarts of shorts, one quart of Indian meal, and one quart of ground oats per day, will make a good feed for winter butter, and if some well cured corn stalks are occasionally fed the butter will not suffer. Linseed meal might be substituted for Indian meal; it would give a higher color to the butter; but if too much was fed the flavor of the butter would be injured.

The amount of grain proposed to be fed to cows is small compared with the quantity that may be fed, yet the health and endurance of the cows should be considered in feeding. Some cows are soon rendered feverish by the feeding of meal, and it would be well to give attention to this; and it may be found that some cows might be safely fed with double the quantity that others can digest, and will give return in butter sufficient to pay for such feed.