

# THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE

AND HOME MAGAZINE

\* AGRICULTURE, STOCK, DAIRY, POULTRY, HORTICULTURE, VETERINARY, HOME CIRCLE.\*

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VOL. XXXIV.

LONDON, ONT., AND WINNIPEG, MAN., FEBRUARY 15, 1899.

No. 472

## EDITORIAL.

### The Improvement of Canadian Beeves.

Several correspondents in this issue of the FARMER'S ADVOCATE deal with the subject of calf-rearing and the finishing period in fattening cattle. The feeding of beef cattle is a subject of great practical importance to many farmers in nearly every portion of the country, though of course it is carried on much more extensively in some places than in others. Whether for the local butcher trade or for export, the feeder aims to produce at a profit as good an animal for the block as possible in a reasonable period of time. In this work experience is the great teacher, and those who feed regularly for the British market have no doubt attained the highest degree of skill. It is in the great lairages, such as we find at Liverpool, that our cattle come in direct competition with the cheaply-produced and well-ripened output of the U. S. corn belt and the luxuriant grasses of the Argentine. The foundation of all good beef cattle is laid in the breeding, and for years the South American cattlemen have been buying the best sires obtainable in England and Scotland, the produce of which are reared under peculiarly favorable conditions of climate and food supply. Considering the long sea voyage these animals must make to England, their quality when they land is remarkable. Not long ago came the announcement, which, however, we have not yet seen confirmed, that the Argentine Government proposed to further stimulate the trade by a subsidy in some form. The excellence of American corn-fed cattle is indicated by the higher quotations which in many instances they bring, compared with Canadians, in the Old Country market. For years our Governments, Federal and Provincial, have left no stone unturned to develop dairying, particularly the export butter branch of it. It certainly behooves Canadian cattle-raisers to bestir themselves by producing beeves of the highest quality, and feeding them in such a way as will leave a reasonable margin of profit. Then again, our exporters, small as well as great, must have fair play in the matter of transportation rates and privileges, and where improved facilities are needed the Government must further interpose, as it is doing for the export of butter. At the present moment, however, the practical question on the farm is the rearing of the calf intended for a beef animal and the finishing of export beeves. The individual cattleman may not be able to vary transportation rates or Old Country commission charges, which seem to have the certainty of death and taxes, but he can with intelligent purpose determine what manner of animals he will feed, and regulate their cost. The first few months of an animal's life may determine whether it will be a profit or a loss to its owner. In fattening cattle the feeder must make the best of his conditions, utilize any good foods which he can purchase to advantage, such as American corn, to which our feeders now have access, and neglect no precaution that will promote comfort, health and gain in flesh. We would, therefore, commend a thoughtful perusal of the letters on these subjects elsewhere, and would be pleased to receive from others seasonable and helpful suggestions upon any points not fully covered, because "in a multitude of councillors there is safety."

### Canadian Poetry and Butter.

Mr. C. C. James, Deputy Minister of Agriculture for Ontario, takes advantage of the opportunity which is afforded him when replying to the frequent inquiries received at the department from all parts of the world respecting Ontario to bring Canadian literature to the notice of his correspondents. Recently he forwarded to Mr. Thomas Hutchinson, of Pegswood, Morpeth, England, who

has been making the acquaintance of Ontario by correspondence, copies of the Christmas numbers of the FARMER'S ADVOCATE and Acta Victoriana, in which were poems by Mr. J. W. Bengough. The other day Mr. Bengough received a letter from Mr. Hutchinson expressing admiration of his poems, and adds: "I, for one, as one of the directors of our local co-operative society, can vouch for the superlative quality of your Canadian produce—butter in particular. But it is as an ardent admirer of Canadian poetry that I am inflicting this letter upon you."

### Experimental Work in the Northwest.

At the last session of the Northwest Territories Assembly at Regina a sum was voted to initiate agricultural experimental work under the direction of the Territorial Government. While work of great excellence and practical value is being done at the Dominion Government Experimental Farm at Indian Head, it has been contended that when the vast area and varying conditions of the three Territories—Assiniboia, Alberta, and Saskatchewan—are considered, there is room for a system of local substations. For a long time the subject has received considerable study on the part of Mr. C. W. Peterson, Deputy Commissioner of Agriculture in the Territories, and the outline of the plans contemplated were given in a letter some time ago in our Manitoba and Northwestern edition. The success attending the district fruit stations in the Province of Ontario was cited as a good precedent for local experimental or demonstrative work in the Northwest, or for that matter in any of the Provinces. The N.-W. T. plan will no doubt be developed gradually. It is not the intention to embark in any elaborate undertaking. Understanding their own needs and conditions, the work will be begun and developed in such a way that full use will be made of the experience gained. For instance, a start may be made by taking up on one farm, or portion of a farm leased for the purpose, the question of irrigation, and so on with other problems having a practical bearing upon agriculture in different districts. The results will be watched with interest.

### Importance of Good Seed.

There are good grounds for the belief that a large majority of farmers are not sufficiently careful in the cleaning and selection of their seed grain and clover and grass seeds. The result of experiments at some of the Government Experiment Stations in Canada have shown that an increased yield of from four to six bushels per acre has been reaped from selected, hand-picked seed over that from seed from the same bin cleaned in the ordinary way by running it once through a fanning mill. While hand-picking of seed on a large scale is not practicable, these experiments serve a good purpose in emphasizing the importance of greater care in the cleaning of seed grain by the use of good mills with proper screens, for if but one or two bushels per acre can in this way be added to the yield, it will many times pay for the added labor. Besides the probable increase in the price for the resulting crops which will follow on account of the improved sample. Let each farmer figure for himself what the gain to him would be if by careful cleaning of his seed grain the year's crop on his farm were increased by one bushel per acre, and it is safe to say he will be impressed with a new sense of the importance of this subject. Multiply this result by the millions of acres of grain annually cultivated in Canada, and it is easily seen that the increase would mean millions of dollars more to the farmers of this country. A series of letters of enquiry sent out by this office last year to leading grain-growers, asking their opinion as to the relative importance of selection and of frequent changing of seed, elicited the response in a majority of cases that selection was of decidedly greater importance,

though most of them advised occasional changes of seed from one locality to another, not necessarily a change of variety, for if a variety is doing well in a district, a change to another and untried variety should only be made on a small scale until it has proved itself well adapted to soil and circumstances. It would seem hardly necessary to utter a word of warning against the purchase or exchange of seed from a farm on which noxious weeds prevail, as such a course may lead to endless trouble and annoyance. A few seeds of wild mustard or wild oats introduced in this way may worry a man for years. Probably in no class of seeds are those of noxious weeds more frequently introduced than in clover and grass seeds. In these they are not so easily detected, and it is all the more important that care should be observed to deal only with reliable seedsmen, and that careful inspection be made of all seeds purchased so as to be satisfied, as far as it is possible, that pure seed only is sown. There are many small weed seeds which are difficult to distinguish with the naked eye, and for this reason clover and grass seeds should always be examined under a magnifying glass and, if possible, it is well to ascertain where the seed has been grown and to be assured that it has come from a farm that is known to be free from noxious weeds. It is poor economy to purchase low-priced seed if one is not sure it is of good quality and clean. A few cents per bushel often represents the difference in price between first and second class seed, but if the low priced seed be impure or inferior it may mean many dollars of difference to the purchaser in the character of the crop. It is well, in this matter, to take time by the forelock and make an early selection of clover and grass seeds before the stock has been culled, and to prepare the seed grain for the spring sowing during the winter weeks while there is ample time to do it well, and not leave it till the rush of spring work is on and the temptation comes to hurry and to slight the work. Do well what you do, and leave not for a future day what can be better done to-day. We would also emphasize the great importance of purchasing good selected root and garden seed, and advise farmers never to buy seed simply because it is low priced, expecting to get a good article. Really good seed cannot be bought cheap by the wholesale dealers, and retailers do not sell below cost.

### The Live Stock Outlook.

Reports which we have just received from feeders in several districts indicate a decidedly improved demand for export cattle. Several sales are already mentioned at five cents per pound, live weight, for May deliveries. One writes: "I have sold \$2,000 worth of stock in the past ten days." This included, we understand, his stall-fed beasts and a few breeding animals besides. Better prices for export beeves will react favorably on stock for home consumption. Since the removal of the ninety-day quarantine many thousands of feeders have been drawn away to the States at very good prices, considering that they were not of the most desirable type. It has had doubtless a stimulating effect upon trade, but in our opinion a better class of beeves should be reared and finished at home in order that the full advantage of the industry be derived. The prices being realized for other farm stock are also encouraging.

There has been a corresponding advance in the prices, and demand for breeding stock. The annual meetings of the Canadian live stock breeders in Toronto last week were very largely attended and most encouraging throughout, as we foreshadowed in our last issue. From present appearances 1899 ought to be a record year with the Canadian breeder and farmer, whose greatest security rests in an intelligent system of live stock husbandry.