

## Our English Letter

### The Season—Crop Yields of the World—Wheat Exporting Countries—Prospects for Pork—Britvities

London, April 26, 1906.

Not since 1893 has April opened or been favored with such a spell of brilliant weather, and as this year was one of the driest on record, with total failures in the crops of roots and grass, it is much to be hoped that the present year will not continue to bear comparison with it. The stock of hay saved will not be more than half that of a year ago and the price is steadily rising from the low level at which it has been so long. Milk contracts on the average have been made at the same figure as last year, but those who had the courage and judgment to hold out have been rewarded with a better price. With the very high price of these now prevailing it is incomprehensible that farmers should agree to supply milk for a year at prices but a small fraction better than 1s. 6d. (36 cents) for the winter and 1s. 1d. (26 cents) for the summer for a barn gallop, roughly nine quarts; yet such is the case in numerous instances and the terms often required are so onerous and unfair that no farmer of independence can subscribe to them.

#### THE DUST NUISANCE

The dry weather has again brought the dust nuisance to the front and more especially has this been the case during the last few days, when motor cars in large numbers have been running up and down our roads and even along some of our quiet and secluded lanes. The grievance is really becoming a serious one. It is not merely that the roads for any other purpose is brought into existence to the flesh, instead of the pleasure it used to be; but the clouds of dust are such that produce growing anywhere near our popular and much used highways is suffering and stunted in its growth and rendered in many cases almost unsalable. There are many experiments with dust-preventing preparations being made, but they do not meet with any large amount of success. The modern way of laying roads with big stones and fine binding which rapidly becomes loose is certainly ill-adapted to the needs of the present day. Yet it would not be surprising to see the improvement coming—when it does come—from the motor car makers rather than from those responsible for the upkeep of the roads.

#### CROP YIELDS OF THE WORLD

Among the many interesting articles which appear in the countries of the "Transactions of the Highland and Agricultural Society" there is none of more practical value than the contribution by my friend, Mr. W. E. Bear, on the crop yields at home and abroad. The writer enters into the subject in a very thorough manner and has brought together in a concise form information dealing with practically all the countries of the world. The claim that Great Britain can still be relied upon to produce the best class of farmers in the world is met with the statement that they have equalled, if not surpassed, in two or three countries. He points out that the average yield of wheat per acre in Great Britain, 30.95 bushels to the acre, is higher than that of any country, while Belgium and Holland alone equal our yield of barley. Germany being in the fourth place and New Zealand fifth. In the case

of the oat crop, Belgium and Holland came out far above any other country, the average being respectively 34.95 and 32.85 bushels per acre, which Mr. Bear thinks can hardly be credited. This compares with 40.51 bushels per acre for the United Kingdom, 30.15 in the United States and 34.76 bushels in North-West Canada. Germany is little ahead of Great Britain with 39.69 bushels, although still under the average of the United Kingdom, but such large grain growing countries as Manitoba, Ontario, New Zealand and the Canadian North-West follow behind the mother country at a respectful distance.

For rye Belgium stands first, followed by Germany, Holland, Denmark and Sweden, while other countries are far below them. Belgium is again at the top for potatoes, with 6.77 tons per acre, New Zealand being second with 6.35 tons and Great Britain third with 5.75 tons per acre. Great Britain is beaten by several countries in the production of hay; but for the production of roots there is no approach to the yields of man and turpins of this country.

#### THE WHEAT EXPORTING COUNTRIES

Mr. Bear points out that a striking feature of the statistics is the meagreness of the yields of wheat in all the exporting countries. Even where the average is 13 to 20 bushels per acre, selling for export at less than farmers in this country obtain, the gross return is shown to be a fair profit on the season's labor. What then, asks Mr. Bear, is to be said of 6 to 10 bushels per acre grown in several countries and sold at 3s. per bushel on the farm? The gross return of 100 acres yielding 10 bushels to the acre would not pay the wages of two men and a pair of horses in any British colony or the United States. His opinion is that the small farmers who produce most of the exported wheat, grow that cereal to provide money for clothes and other things, while living mainly off the produce of their farms. Barley, in most new countries, is in only limited demand; otherwise it would be more extensively grown than it is in Canada and the United States, where its yield per acre is strikingly greater than that of wheat. The yield of oats in the United States is only about 4 bushels more per acre than that of barley, while in Canada it is about nine bushels more, which shows the comparative value of the crops in the two countries. Mr. Bear concludes his article by saying: "The choice among the cereals from a financial point of view is but a beggarly one; and yet in spite of all that is said about the desertion of the rural districts for the towns, the attractions of farm life for vast numbers of people are sufficient to induce them to labor on, year after year, for little more than a bare subsistence."

#### PROSPECTS FOR PORK

Pig breeding is a veritable see-saw and the pork trade one of the most variable there is. At one time every other man you meet is out to sell, and no one to buy them. According to various accounts which reach this country, breeders in Holland, Canada and Denmark are neglecting pigs just now, at any rate the supply of pork in the London markets has been less this season than for some time past and as a consequence prices are high-

er. Those who have pigs are likely to do well out of them. It is not likely that things will remain as they are and most probably history will repeat itself and the world in general seeing that there is a surplus of pork will again go in for pork, with the inevitable result that prices will again fall.

#### BRITVITIES

Readers will already have seen the fate of the Canadian Cattle Bill. It has removed a load of anxiety from the majority of farmers in this country.

A run through Ireland a few days ago showed that agriculturally speaking, things were rather more promising than in England. More rain has fallen this year and the pastures, which are the backbone of Irish farming, are much better in condition than here. Many of the cattle look very rough in their coats and have evidently been affected by the east winds.

A visit to the Royal Dublin Society's Spring Show, which is almost exclusively confined to agricultural animals, demonstrated how the quality of Irish beasts has improved during the last decade. Some excellent Shorthorns were exhibited, but what struck me most was the fact that most of the bulls were white, or, if not, very light roans. This is a mistake in many ways; for instance, foreign buyers are most particular in seeing that they get reds, or at all events red roans.

The color of Shorthorns should receive more attention than it does, for these white bulls which have been used so much of late, good as they are individually, do not toward the breed, leaving behind them light colored stock, which is disliked by the majority. Provision markets are quiet, but a fair consumptive demand is absorbing most of the stock that arrives. Butter is in rather better demand, while pork products are firm and prices bid fair to advance even higher than they are at present. The apple trade is over the top and over.

The Royal Show at Derby, on June 27 and the following days, bids fair to maintain its reputation and visitors from Canada may rely upon seeing a collection of stock which for variety and quality cannot be equalled the world over.

A. W. S.

#### A Strange Cargo

One of the strangest cargoes a vessel could possibly have was unloaded at the London docks on the evening of March 1. It consisted of several sacks filled with dried flies, consigned to a large firm of grain merchants. These flies, originating in Brazil, have been sent here for use in the manufacture of food for chickens, cage birds, and the like. They were caught on the river Amazon by Brazilians, who travel up the river in flat-bottomed boats and who are provided with gauze nets, with which they capture these insects in millions, as flies hover in dense clouds over many of the swampy reaches of the Amazon.

The flies thus caught are killed, dried in the sun and then placed in sacks. Upon arrival in London they are mixed with millet and other grain, and are sold as chicken food, etc. Some time ago the Brazilian government, fearing that the fish would be starved, forbade the exportation of flies; hence the price of this strange commodity, which used to be 6d. per pound, has now risen to 1s. 6d. per pound, and is an little more—Scientific American.