

popularity is probably nostalgia. People can either remember, or would like to remember, when the work horse had a place on every farm.

Work horses were used at Ottawa's Central Experimental Farm until the late 1950s to put in crops and clear roadways. After this work was mechanised, the horses were put to a new use, pulling wagonloads of visitors on tours of the farm. It proved a very popular enterprise: some 30,000 visitors make the tour in the farm wagon. Mr. Henry drives it, using six big Clydesdales in three separate teams. He also puts them in a four-horse hitch for local parades and later this year hopes to use them all in a six-horse hitch.

A few years ago it was difficult to get harness for heavy horse teams. Now there are a number of harness-makers, but the difficulty is getting the horses properly shod. For saddle horses it is possible to buy factory-made shoes, but for the larger horses iron must be heated and hand-turned to get the right fit. Here Agriculture Canada is fortunate, for Mr. Henry does his own blacksmith work. The horses are shod every five or six weeks.

Clydesdales were probably the most common breed in Canada in early farming days. They are usually brown with four white socks and a lot of silky hair around the hooves. The Belgian horse, which is the heaviest breed and ranges through every shade of brown, is very popular in Canada and the United States. Percherons, a French breed, ranging in colour from white to black but most commonly dapple grey, are also quite popular. The British Shire and Suffolk Punch are less common in Canada. Quebec has a home-grown breed of light draught horse called the Canadian, dark brown to black in colour and very sturdy for its size. ♦

Patients eat well from deep freeze

The familiar outcry of hospital patients over tasteless, luke-warm food, has ceased with the introduction of a system of deep-freeze meals at a regional hospital in Summerland, British Columbia. The system, evolved by hospital staff working with a team of researchers from Agriculture Canada, gets rid of the old steam cabinets and tables so long associated with hospital meals. Instead, whole meals are prepared in quantity and frozen, to be heated only minutes before they are served to patients.

Researchers sampling and testing the meals have found that they not only look and taste better than under the old system, but they maintain their nutritive value better. Loss of vitamins from vegetables is greatly reduced, compared with the old steam-table method. Also, the new system ensures that the hospital will have a good supply of meals in the event of short-term food shortages.

Bacterial tests showed that when basic ingredients were carefully chosen and sanitary methods of preparation were employed, the meals were also very safe. More than 100 new or modified recipes have been developed under the orders of a dietetics director, June Palmer. ♦

Animals have a choice of 8000 dishes

If Canadian farm animals could have smorgasbord, they would have more than 8,000 dishes to choose from. That's how many different animal feeds are registered for sale in Canada every year.

All applications for registration from feed manufacturers and importers go through the federal Government's official feed unit, where they are carefully examined to make sure they are safe for animals, man and for the environment. The foods must also be judged useful and effective for the farmers who buy them, so that the farmer is protected against false or exaggerated claims and gets the product he pays for. Except for customer-formula feeds, tonics and conditioners, all feeds with two or more ingredients must be officially registered before they go on the market.

Dr. Hugh Jeffers, in charge of the feed unit, says that these controls are necessary because of the complex nature of today's formula feeds.

Harking back to the simple old days, he remarks "In the days when farm animals ate mostly farm-grown grains and roughages, there was little need for feed regulation." ♦

Are sexier sheep better sheep?

A hardy band of Newfoundland sheep is being carefully studied by agriculturalists at an experimental farm in Nappan, Nova Scotia, because, unlike others, they are willing and able to breed at any time of the year.

One of the basic problems of the sheep industry, according to the farm's superintendent Tom MacIntyre, is that most ewes will breed during only four to six months of the year. The short breeding period for most commercial strains sends lambs to market only at traditional lamb-eating seasons. During the rest of the year, lamb supplies drop off. Meat packers and retailers hesitate to handle lamb all year round because production is too variable.

At the same time, farmers lose by having to keep up their flocks with the current high price of buildings and feed the

year-round, while they can only market their product during a short few months.

The answer, says Mr. MacIntyre, is to develop sheep which will have the urge to mate at any time of the year. Agriculture Canada's research has extended the breeding season of flocks on four of their experimental farms and several flocks at agricultural colleges are also being used in attempts to extend the breeding season. Some breeds, such as the Dorset and Finnish Landrace, have shown considerable year-round breeding activity, but so far no one has established this trait well enough in any one breed or cross for it to be of use to farmers.

This is why the Newfoundland sheep have been brought to Nappan. By comparison of their breeding rate with that of an experimental flock at the federal

department's Lennoxville research station, the researchers hope to gain information which will eventually help breeders in their efforts to put this desirable trait into a new breed of sheep that will come into heat any month of the year. This would enable the farmer to control his sheep lambing and so, eventually, bring an end to the feast-or-famine cycle of lamb supplies to packing houses and supermarkets.

However, the route to increased steady production is not entirely clear-cut. Year-round breeding seems to suppress the frequency of twinning in lamb production. Wanting the best of all worlds, the scientists also hope to breed the twinning characteristic into flocks of the future. ♦