

Profitable Winter Farming.

The great drawback on successful Northern farming lies in the fact, that, for six months in the year, nature is at a stand still. There is no production, and consumption goes on with accelerated ratio. Years ago, we used to hear an old song which strongly illustrates the disadvantage of farming in the older States. It is the argument of the farmer with his wife to persuade her to "go West."

"For here we must labor each day in the field, And the winter concludes all the summer's toil yield."

When the country was new, there was no lack of labor for the farmer, even in the coldest weather. Clearing the land of trees and stumps and preparing for next season's operations, furnished abundant and most profitable employment. Though the compensation was small, there was never lack of something to do. Small earnings added economy, and naturally resulted in property if not wealth. Of late years all this is changed. Farmers in winter find very little to do, and it usually costs any man more to live idly than when employed. The problem of the time is to find some constant and profitable employment for farmers during the winter season, and a confessedly hard problem it must be conceded, when thousands of farmers fail to make money even in the growing season. Yet we believe it can be done, and is done by thousands of farmers in the feeding and fattening of stock. Where animals are merely kept in "store" condition through the winter, there is certainly no profit but an almost entire loss. The animal may be worth a trifle more in spring than in fall, but unless there is a positive gain in milk, wool, growth or fat, there is slender chance for profit. The wisest economy in food, with warm shelter is also needed to make liberal feeding profitable, and herein is the advantage of large operations. It does not cost ten times as much to feed ten cows as it does to feed one, nor twice as much to care for fifty head of cattle as for twenty-five. With large buildings, suitably arranged food may be cut and steamed, while the expense is entirely too great for small operations. This does not necessarily imply large farms, though these large feeding establishments will generally go with them, and the feed used be grown on the farm. The only successful winter feeding which we believe in is that wherein grain and hay consumed on the farm bring as much profit as if sold, and if this is so, excepting the cost of transportation, there is as much profit in feeding bought grain as that grown on the farm. Where large winter feeding is practiced on a small farm the tendency will be to grow roots, and possibly grain at home, buying the corn needed, and also such other grain food as may be thought best. This is the method wisely pursued by some Eastern farmers who have found by experience that they cannot grow corn as cheaply as Western farmers will lay it at their doors. This heavy feeding and buying of corn, bran, or other feed, rapidly increases the fertility of the farm, enabling it to produce more and more. This is one secret of the success of John Johnston as a farmer. For many years he fattened sheep every winter, and never but once did he fail to receive a profit on the corn and other feed consumed, besides the large amount of valuable manure. The richness of Mr. Johnston's farm, rivaling the best-managed farms of England, is doubtless due to this management. Other farmers of our acquaintance make a good thing every winter fattening cattle, and others still by keeping cows and selling the milk. It is a fact that by skillful management and wise selection of stock, farmers can, and do make more money in winter than they do by their summer operations. This is what we call superior farming, and those who would rival it must learn to adopt similar methods, making no season of the year barren of profit, but each continuously productive.

Keeping Apples.

As the crop is short, and prices have ruled high, it is all the more important to preserve apples in the best condition. The main element of success is a low and uniform temperature, just above freezing. The house cellar is the farmer's fruit-room in winter, and if properly managed, answers the purpose very perfectly. But there is a great deal of carelessness in guarding cellars against extreme zero nights, and the apples and vegetables are frequently frozen before the owner suspects any danger. Banishing the under-pinning with a thick mat of leaves, straw, old hay, or evergreen boughs, will keep out the frost. These are within reach of every farmer, and are easily kept in place with boards or poles. But some cellars are very moist, and the temperature is likely to be too high rather than too low. This can be remedied by having a window that can be shut or opened at pleasure. By consulting a thermometer, which costs but a trifle, it is quite easy to keep the temperature in the cellar between 32 and 40 degrees, which is even enough for all practical purposes. The apples keep better in barrels, or in small tight packages, than in open piles or shelves, because they do not feel the change so soon. For the same reason some wrap each apple in paper, or pack them in sawdust or land plaster. This requires a considerable labor, but nice fresh apples in May and June are worth working for. In dry cork sawdust they keep sufficiently well without wrappers. If this is available, dry hard-wood sawdust should be used in preference to pine or other resinous woods. These affect the odor, and sometimes the taste of the apples. If no packing is used, the barrels should be overhauled once a month, and if any decayed apples are found, they should be carefully removed. Keep the barrels headed. Look at the thermometer every night and morning. If too warm, let in more cold air; if too cold, shut the window entirely. It takes but a moment to regulate the temperature. By this simple process we have never failed to keep winter apples in good condition until spring. — American Agriculturist.

Curing Hams and Pork.

"G. W. D." Ocean Co., New Jersey, writes: "When a slice from a ham has to be par-boiled, or soaked over night, it was not properly cured, this treatment makes it dry and hard, and deprives it of all its flavor. I have had many years experience in curing large quantities of hams, and have had the reputation of knowing 'how to do it.' For 100 pounds of meat take 7 lbs. ground rock salt, 5 lbs. clean brown sugar, 2 oz. pure saltpetre, 3 oz. pearl ash or saleratus, and 4 gallons pure soft water. Put it all in a proper vessel over the fire, and before it comes to a boil, commence skimming, and continue until all impurities have risen to the surface, when done properly, the pickle will be perfectly clear and pure. If a potato or an egg will float in it, it is all right, if not add more salt."

Hams should be left undisturbed for three or four days after killing—hung up in an airy place.

Now take 1 gallon of sweet m. sea salt, 2 oz. of saltpetre, and 4 quarts fine ground salt, thoroughly mix them, and with a wooden paddle cover the hams, skin and flesh side alike. Lay them skin down for 3 or 4 days, and not touching each other, if it can be avoided. At the end of this time they will be ready for the pickle. Put in the bottom of a good sweet barrel, a layer of rock salt, half to three quarters of an inch deep, rack the hams closely, cover with pickle, and weight down. Serve pork in the same, but put a sprinkling of salt between the layers. Hams weighing 10 to 14 lbs., should remain in pickle about 5 weeks, those from 15 to 20 lbs., 6 or 7 weeks.

In smoking use corn-cobs, hickory, maple or beech. Now take marlin, or tarred rope yarn, to one piece around the shank, another around the thick part, and passing still another lengthwise, looping to each. Make a loop to hang up by with shank down—this prevents cracking in a great degree, and retains the juices inside the skin. I need hardly say that no heated smoke should reach the hams. I believe this rock salt possesses preservative qualities not found in common sea salt. It costs about 30 cents per bushel.

[This last statement would be better expressed by saying that sea salt contains substances which rock-salt does not.—ED.] — American Agriculturist.

How to Secure Premium Honey

Dr P. A. Baker, in the Beekeeper's Magazine, publishes a plan to secure the largest quantity and the best honey, which is well worthy of trial.

The plan is simply to keep a very strong colony queenless during the period of the greatest flow of honey. All apiarists know that a virgin swarm will work with more energy in building comb and storing honey, than one with a full supply. It is not uncommon for strong families, with everything needful for storing honey in surplus boxes, to loaf about the hive, until a few empty frames are given between the full ones, when they will soon be filled, but, being in the queen's chamber, she immediately performs her maternal duty, and you get no honey. The law is unchangeable, in their allowing no empty space between brood combs, and the law compelling bees to fill the space with comb, acts with like force in indicating to the queen her duty. By virtue of cause and effect, if the entire hive is made into space, it is but fulfilling that law for the bees to promptly fill it with comb and honey, if perchance, it is in abundant supply, but, madam queen being present, we must allow a considerable force to assist in attention to her royalty, dethrone her and supply the colony with material to make a new one, and yet allow none to mature for a period, and we shall have our boxes filled with the beautiful nectar. The operation is to put two large swarms, without queens or comb, into a hive filled with empty sectional frames or honey boxes, and give one broad comb at one end of the hive, and before the new queen is hatched, remove the comb and give them another. When the second has become fertile, the greatest flow of honey being over, remove the honey frames or boxes, and fill the hive with combs, or empty frames, as the fall season for honey may indicate. The queens and broad combs can be utilized to advantage, which any intelligent apiarist will understand.

An Expensive Pig.

A hog case, involving about five hundred lbs. weight of the unclean beast, has recently occupied the attention of the Circuit Court at Logansport, Ind., very much to the satisfaction and profit of the legal fraternity.

So intricate was the case, and so subtle the arguments that the jury took thirty-six hours to arrive at a decision, and after justice was done it was found that the costs of the case amounted to \$2,000, or \$4 per pound for the pork in litigation. Judging from the facts already developed it is more than probable that the beaten party possesses obstinacy and idocy enough to appeal to a higher court, so that Logansport may fairly aspire to the honor of producing the most expensive pig on record.

Shipping Cattle to England.

Forty two head of cattle recently shipped to England via Montreal, after 1,100 miles inland journey from Illinois, were sold at Glasgow for \$160 per head. They are described as having been in admirable condition, the long ocean journey not having apparently affected them in the slightest degree.

Twenty-nine of the original shipment died on the way over, their death being attributed to an injudicious diet of hard-prosed and somewhat stringy hay, after having been fed, prior to embarkation, upon soft meat. This is an evil that experience will very soon remedy, and the broad facts remain that cattle can, with care and judgment, be shipped to England, and arrive there in such condition as to command remunerative prices.

Feeding Hens for Eggs.

We are often told that a hen is merely a machine for the production of eggs. Carrying out this idea, a correspondent of the New York Tribune makes the following sensible remarks about poultry management.

If only enough food is given to just keep her alive—to just run the machine—no eggs, of course, can be expected, but usually there is no trouble in this direction. People do not often err in not giving their hens enough; it is more frequently the case that they give them too much, and of the wrong kind of food. If a machine is fed with too much raw material, more than it has capacity to utilize, it becomes clogged in its action and fails in its work. Or, if the wrong kind of material be supplied, the desired product will not be turned out. For a hen to produce an egg daily she must be supplied with the raw material out of which to make it. There must be albuminous substances, such as are found in meat and grain, out of which to form the white of the egg, and oily or fatty matters to form the yolk, and lime to produce the shell. Various kinds of grain contain these substances in different proportions, and this fact renders some kinds better adapted for the food of fowls than others. Wheat, wheat middlings, oats, barley, Indian corn and buck-wheat are good articles of food for hens, if they are used alternately. If Indian corn were to compose the whole diet of hens, they would be rendered too fat for laying purposes, but, as a regular diet it is very valuable. About three times per week the hens will need some bits of meat, to furnish more abundantly the albuminous element of the egg. Burned oyster shells, pounded, old mortar, bone meal, or something similar, should be kept by them at all times, as material for shells. There should also be a constant supply of fresh, clean water. Hens should never be permitted to eat snow. Snow water is highly injurious to them. Many persons feed their hens all they will eat, and keep grain by them all the time. This is a bad practice. More hens are injured by over-feeding than in any other way. If a man eats all that he can, he becomes, to some extent, incapacitated for exertion, and, if he continues the practice, his system will become deranged. So the hen, when over-fed, becomes too fat, and is good for nothing but to be marketed.

A simple rule in feeding hens is to give them as much as they will eat eagerly, but no more. As soon as they cease to eat with avidity, and will not run for the food, it should be removed. Fowls should be fed in this way three times a day, viz., morning, noon and night. The morning's meal should consist of soft food of some kind, for, during the night, the crop and stomach have become empty. If whole grain is fed, the fowl is obliged to grind it before she gets any nourishment, and delay in the morning is injurious, therefore it is best to have scalded meal and bran, with mashed potatoes, prepared. At noon, a dinner of grain or meal may be given. At night, grain should be fed, so that the hens will have something substantial in their crops to last them through the night. In winter, Indian corn is good to feed at night; in summer, oats, wheat or barley may be used. Wheat middlings are an excellent summer food, because of the flesh-forming elements contained in them, the requisites for producing eggs. Soft food should be mixed rather dry, so that, when thrown upon the ground, it will fall in pieces. When wet, it sticks to the beaks, to the annoyance of the fowls, and is also liable to derange their digestion. Fowls require also a daily supply of green or fresh vegetables both summer and winter. Chopped turnips, cabbages or apples are suitable for winter. In summer, access to green grass is the best means of gratifying their wants. In order to be successful in keeping fowls, their wants should be attended to with the same care and regularity that is bestowed upon other animals, the increase in the eggs will then be perceptible.

Farming vs. Manufacturing.

Although we are of those who think that, as a general rule, a man succeeds best in life by sticking to his own calling, yet, when we see the immense profit realized by manufacturers, we cannot wonder that our farmers cast a longing eye upon the factories.

The great western manufacturer, McCormick, admitted that his reaper, for which he charged \$217, only cost \$45 to make, and that a sick-rake was made for \$20 and sold for \$45, thus showing a profit on these two articles of 350 and 125 per cent.

Nor are these profits confined to agricultural implements. The sewing machine, instead of being a universal blessing to every American home, has been made the instrument of extortion to an extent almost incredible.

The Scientific American, which is one of the best informed and ablest journals in the country, estimates the profits of three manufacturers of sewing machines, in 1873, at six million dollars each, while the agents employed by them to sell the machines netted over forty million dollars in the one year. Such profits are, of course, only possible by selling the machines at a price enormously in excess of the cost of production, and we are, therefore, not surprised to learn that the machines which cost from seven to fifteen dollars to manufacture, the average cost being under twelve dollars, are sold at from sixty-five to one hundred and twenty-five dollars.

The power of monopoly and combination protected by unjust patent laws is taking millions upon millions from the producers, and this fact alone should determine us to stick closer together, and not merely to talk about co-operation, but to enforce it thoroughly and practically.

By all falling in and supporting our leaders we shall supply them with force and power to break through any monopoly, however strong, but to make the effort successful all must join.

Home Manners.

Some people have different sets of manners, which they put on and off as they do their different suits of clothes. They are all courtesy in the street, civil and deferential in their place of business, bland as a May morning in any social gathering, and an intolerable nuisance at home. When they enter the door down drops the curtain, and darkness and gloom gather about the household. It is hard to conceive that it is the same man who has been bowing and smiling all day, as you see his frown and hear his growl in the domestic den, everything with him seems to go wrong there. The house is too hot or too cold—the meals are badly served—there is too much litter lying around—the evening paper has been mislaid—the piano is rattling forever—everybody leaves the door open—the children in the way and must be sent off to bed—the servants are careless—there is too much money spent in the family—the furniture is not taken proper care of—and so on indefinitely.

Sometimes the presence of a stranger operates as a restraint upon the exhibition of bad manners at home, and sometimes not exemplary couples, who are really quite fond of each other and would repudiate the idea of living together on anything like bad terms, fall into the habit of indulging in perpetual tiffs before company, bandying words of mutual reproach, which, although they may not mean very much, make the visitor very uncomfortable.

It is not well to administer family discipline before strangers. If a child is properly trained in private, he will be likely to behave himself decently in company, and not otherwise. It is not expected that he will put on "company manners," as his father and mother may do, when he is allowed to violate the laws of good breeding in ordinary life.

It is not well to fall into the habit of criticizing the food, whether you have guests at the table or not. In hotels and restaurants this is common, especially on the part of those who have little to eat at home that is fit to be eaten; but, in the domestic circle, the criticism is understood to be a reflection upon the style of house-keeping, for which the mistress of the family is responsible. If you furnish poor material for the table, you cannot expect to have good food; and if good material is spoiled in cooking, you had better deal with the artist of your kitchen in private, or procure a better cook.

It is in bad taste to tell your guests the price of this or that thing about the house, and to dwell at length upon how much it costs you to live. This may be admissible in the case of some pictures or wines, the merit of which no one might suspect, unless he were told what was paid for them. It does not add to the charm of my friend's hospitality to have the fact pressed upon my attention that the hangings which shade the windows, and the windows which reflect my form, or the carpet that I tread under my feet, could never have been procured except by one whose resources or credit are infinitely beyond my own.

The manner in which old people are treated in a family is a good test of their home manners. It is useless to conceal the fact that aged persons are apt to be a little tiresome, with here and there an exception. The habits of life and modes of thought have changed materially since they were young, and they are not always ready to make due allowance for this. My good old grandfather told me, after he had passed his ninetieth year, that he had no doubt after a while people would be glad to give up the new-fangled railroads and steamboats, and go back to the comfortable sailing-vessel and stage coach. But it is not a good sign when the ancient people are thrust into a corner, and their questions unanswered, and their trite words of counsel unheeded. We should remember that we are liable, in process of time, to grow old ourselves, and as we treat our fathers so we may expect our children to treat us.

Telling the Age of Sheep.

What marks indicate the age of sheep, and are the different breeds alike in these indications? —S. S. W.

[The size and shape of the teeth are ordinarily a sure criterion of the age of sheep, up to six years old. The lamb teeth are narrow and small. At one year old the two middle front teeth fall out, and are replaced by teeth much wider and larger. The next year two more wide teeth appear, and at six years old the mouth is "full," the lamb teeth having all disappeared. After that the teeth grow darker, longer and narrower, until they eventually fall out. A practiced shepherd can usually judge the age very nearly up to twelve years, any one can up to six years.] —Country Gentleman.

The wheat prospect in England for another year is very poor. Much of the seed grain rotted in the ground from excess of wet and cold and what is left has made a poor growth. It is not possible that the crop of 1870, under the most favorable circumstances hereafter, can be an average one, and bad weather may make it a very light one. The rainfall in the United Kingdom was, in September, 2.66 inches; October, 4.22 inches; and in November, 2.97 inches, or, in three months, 9.85 inches, of which about one-half, or 4.22 inches, was during October. This heavy rainfall has prevented the sowing of fall wheat on heavy soils, and there is a wide acreage unsown with wheat, leaving the agriculturist to the uncertainty of spring sowing.

Sauce for Pudding.—One-half cup of butter; one-half cup of sugar; beat these together with one heaping tablespoon of flour. Pour into it (a little at a time, stirring all the while,) one pint of boiling water, and let it simmer on the stove a few minutes. Add one teaspoon of lemon extract, and the juice of one lemon or a teaspoon of lemon sugar.