

SIR,—I am well pleased with your paper; there is a great deal of information in it. Will you kindly answer me the following questions in your next number:—How much grain will it take a day to keep a steer two years old in good condition till next spring, with hay and straw cut; and what would be the cheapest grain to buy? I am going to winter over a few and fatten on grass for the English market. By answering the above you will oblige an old subscriber.

Y. W., Colborne, Ont.

[There is no object in merely keeping a two-year old in condition; a little more feed would keep him in condition, and also lay on fat and flesh. There is really no profit in keeping over animals more than two years; all the cream is in fat animals of this age, which are fit for the butcher. The more liberally you feed your steers this winter so much more will they be advanced for grass feeding, if this is your object, to turn them out in the beginning of June next. Don't attempt to merely keep stock in condition, but feed for the best results of both developing fat and muscle. You could likely keep a steer in condition at a straw stack, but don't do it. For the best returns in feeding we would recommend 14 lbs. of the various cereals—such as corn, oats and pea meal, with abundance of good hay or oat straw, say 20 lbs. of best clover hay, or 10 lbs. of timothy; 18 lbs. of oat straw, or 20 lbs. of wheat straw, mixed with 8 lbs. of timothy or good meadow hay. These rations are not given to be followed strictly, but only as suggestions of the proper combination of food for fattening cattle. Let our correspondent use his own judgment on this feeding question, but feed plenty.]

Lessons from the Fairs.

SIR,—Now that the fair season for another year is over, it may be well to reflect and enquire what lessons they have taught, what new features, if any, have been introduced; what have been the defects in the management of our fairs, and what changes are required in the interest of exhibitors, who really make the show. My remarks at present apply only to the department of live stock. And, first, I would suggest that, as far as regards the large exhibitions, a more select class of exhibits might be secured, if large premiums were offered, and a corresponding entrance fee required. This would tend to check the practice of entering a large number of animals merely for sale, and with no intention of placing them in competition.

(2.) A better classification of the different breeds should be insisted upon, and to this end intelligent and practical superintendents should be appointed, and should be on hand before the stock begins to arrive, so as to direct them to their places at once, and thus avoid the trouble and annoyance of moving from place to place.

(3.) Where the publication of a catalogue of the stock entered is decided on, a fixed time should be named, after which no entries on any pretext should be received. Without such a rule strictly enforced a catalogue is only a delusion and a snare. Then when the catalogue is prepared, unless numbers are placed on the animals to correspond with the numbers on the catalogue, the whole labor and expense of preparing the catalogue is wasted, as was the case at the Provincial Fair at Guelph, where stacks of printed catalogues were prepared, and could hardly be given away because of this defect.

(4.) No niggardly policy should be allowed in regard to supplying bedding for the stock, as was seen at Guelph, where valuable animals that were used to being bedded knee-deep in straw at home, where visitors are seldom expected, were, while on exhibition at the fair, compelled to lie in the dirt, or on the bare ground. Surely straw is not so scarce or so dear that a sufficiency and even a surplus could not be provided.

(5.) In certain classes of stock (if not all) it may be well to consider whether it would not be advisable to make a separate list of prizes for Canadian bred animals, as well as one opened to imported animals. Notably in some of the classes of sheep and hogs the exhibits this year and last were almost entirely imported, and so highly fed and fitted are these in the hands of the trained shepherds of the old country, that our farmers have in many cases become discouraged, and have ceased to bring out stock of their own breeding. The necessity for this change has already been recognized and provided for at the large exhibitions in the classes of heavy draught horses, and at several county fairs where prizes are given in the sheep

classes for Canadian-bred and also for imported stock.

(6.) In regard to the appointment of judges, the time seems to have arrived when the one-judge system may safely be tried, on a limited scale at least, and in certain classes, where competent and reliable men are available. This system was adopted in the case of two classes at the Toronto exhibition this year, where Mr. Cooper, of Pennsylvania, was invited to judge the class of Jersey cattle, and Mr. Butterfield, of Sandwich, the poultry classes. And at the Norfolk County Fair the pigs were judged by Mr. J. E. Snell, of Edmonton, and the poultry by Mr. Bogue, of London. I have reason to believe that in each case there were fewer complaints on the part of exhibitors than are usually heard where three judges have done the work, and was assured by at least one of the gentlemen who was chosen thus to act, that he never felt more comfortable on an awarding committee than he did on the committee of one. That while he felt a due sense of the responsibility resting upon him, he also recognized the fact that he was trusted to act honorably and impartially, a fact which is calculated to call out a man's best endeavor to deserve the confidence reposed in him. Besides, there is the fact that he knows he must shoulder the whole responsibility of the work, and cannot shift it on to others if he were disposed to do so, and as is too often done in the case of three judges when an unpopular award is made. I would not advise the wholesale adoption of the one-judge system, but certainly do think that it should have a fair trial on a limited scale, at least. Care should, however, be taken that only competent men are appointed, and no man should accept such an appointment unless he has entire confidence in his judgment in the classes on which he has to act.

Yours, etc.,

ON LOOKER, Edmonton, P. O., Ont.

A Plea for Quarterly Fairs.

SIR,—The following suggestions are submitted for the consideration of the farmers of Ontario with the belief that, if put in practice, they would be mutually beneficial to all concerned, and save much expense and be the means of putting an end to a pernicious custom that exists in many counties of the Province. We are fond of copying the Old Country customs, and, to one who gives this subject mature thought, there will appear no good reason why we should not adopt their system of holding periodical fairs for the sale or purchase of farm stock, instead of the prevailing plan of making auction sales, or forcing those who want to purchase to canvass the country to get a supply. That our people, during the long evenings that are approaching, may have an opportunity of discussing the matter, we shall briefly examine the merits and demerits of both systems and try to show the advantages to be gained by fairs at stated times.

There are two seasons at which fat cattle are put into market; one to supply the home demand of towns and cities, and one to supply the export demand. The first extends from Christmas till about the first of February; the second, a week or so before the opening of navigation, or about the second week in April. Two other seasons at which cattle for grazing and grass beef must be put in the market; for graziers, the demand begins about the first of May, and for grass beef, after midsummer. The plan at present is for buyers to send out a set of runners through the country to find what can be had, and some of these of light calibre take trouble to belittle the stock, or spread reports of dull markets abroad, the effects of which have had a tendency to create a very small public opinion of the veracity of those travelling agents, and to make farmers reluctant to sell until, perhaps, two or three sets have gone the rounds, and after two or more of the dealers themselves have interviewed the owners of the cattle. Such a mode of sale has many objectionable features, the principal of which are that it creates a spirit of distrust and a run about way of getting at a fair competing market. For the disposal of stock for wintering over, or graziers for the succeeding summer, the prevailing mode in many localities is to make auction sales on "ten months" or a year's credit and take joint notes for security of payment, which is very objectionable: first, because it encourages a system of going in debt; second, because many on prospects and probabilities of a coming twelve months, purchase what they would not do if they were paying the ready money, and in many cases the probabilities are reversed, and

loss is the consequence; third, some, to insure a brisk sale, supply an abundance of cheap whisky and other excitable, so that purchasers do not so carefully examine the quality of stock, and are not particular for a few dollars since there is a year's credit, and you know that people in that mood are always wealthy and have no poor relations; fourth, because every purchaser has to give a joint note, someone else becomes a debtor for what he did not purchase and will derive no benefit from, and an adverse season or some unforeseen event may render the buyer unable to pay, when the accommodating neighbor will have to pay the debt; fifth, much time and expense are wasted in this way and a hard precedent established.

It will be asked how are we to remedy this state of things; if a farmer finds that he is over-stocked what is he to do, if no jobbers or buyers come along? Certainly the intelligence of the farmers of Canada can suggest a remedy, and, for their consideration, the following plan is proposed:—Let two or more central places in a county be selected where yards and accommodation can be obtained. Advertise in agricultural papers, at least two months in advance, that a fair is to be held for the sale of stock, which may be continued for two days, if one is found to be insufficient, so that there may be ample time for buyers and sellers to make up their minds and see what they are doing; make all grades and kinds of stock saleable in their season at these fairs, except heavy stalled cattle that are not easily or conveniently moved. Make these times and places of sale permanent institutions, as they are on the other side of the Atlantic, and every one would soon be pleased with the change, and many of the demoralizing influences now so prevalent would cease. The matter could be taken up by our county agricultural societies, and the places, times and number of fairs in the year fixed, which might be three or more, as found most suitable, though three would seem to be the least number required to dispose of the class of cattle that are easily moved. One in spring, say between the middle of March and the twentieth of April, at which farm horses, steers, heifers, and springers would be in demand; another some time between the middle of July and first of September, where grass-fed beef stock would form the central figure; and a third about the first of October, for the supply of stock to keep over winter or be sent to the stalls of the distilleries.

By this plan a fair competing market would be open to all, and, more than that, farmers of different localities would have a good and profitable opportunity of seeing the produce of their neighbors' breeding and feeding, while buyers could make better selections and spend their money to much better advantage, and, in fact, could afford to give better prices since they would be saved the expense of keeping a set of agents to drive continually through the county in search of stock.

Farmers and stockdealers, think this matter over, discuss it, and, if possible, be prepared to put it in some permanent working order, and you will have all the little assistance at the disposal of one who has given the scheme some thought and has much faith in its good results. Respect fully submitted by

M. McC

Huron County, October 29, 1883.

SIR,—Perhaps a line from a friend "by the sea" would be acceptable at this time. The crops are all housed except turnips, and they are not grown to any extent. Oats will be above the average. Wheat fair. Potatoes, some report very good and some light. Buckwheat very good; that is a staple crop. Our short season prohibits the sowing of winter wheat. It is all spring wheat down here. The summer and fall has been very dry. The crops have all been housed in splendid condition. But the want of water is seriously felt, most of the water mills having been forced to stop; wells are dry and streams are low. The pastures have suffered, which makes butter scarce, and stock will come to the barn in poor condition. The nights are very cold, but days are fine. Since subscribing for the *Advocate*, eighteen months ago, farming has taken a stronger hold than ever on me. It seems as if we are only children in the business, just learning the alphabet of farming. Some say, when I praise the *Advocate* to them: "Oh, it's no good, we can't think of farming as they do in Ontario." Well, suppose we can't, there is much in the paper to set us to thinking. The trouble is, farmers as a rule do not think enough. If they would sell off their scrub stock and spend the money in a few well-bred animals; farm less ground, and do it better; keep less