

THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE AND HOME MAGAZINE.

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THE DOMINION.

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barley, shorts, etc. (he dare not use even a kernel of Canada corn), that will help to fill the bacon bill (as well as the pig), as so many others have done. He already feels disposed to concede that "good breeds of pigs are, of course, better than poor breeds," but hastens to qualify this startling ultimatum by a declaration which discloses one great trouble gnawing at his vitals, viz.: "The best breed of pigs that ever lived will not make good bacon if fed on free American corn!" He has been losing his morning sleep by the squealing of hungry mongrel swine. Let him try some well-bred ones (see our advertising columns), and keep them well filled with a properly constructed grain ration, soaked say in whey from the Bullock's Corners cheese factory (not forgetting a little exercise on a grass lot, clover preferred, and provided with a few shade trees or other shelter), and he will cease to grieve about free corn, nor begrudge the cattle and other stock feeders of Canada a little addition to the supply of raw material which is a necessary part of a successful system of farming and which proved such a boon during the past season.

Feeding Stock for the Showing.

Periodically some writers for the agricultural press work themselves into a sweat over the high condition in which stock is brought out at the leading exhibitions, alleging that by a system of overfeeding the animals are rendered unfit for breeding purposes and that in many cases the judges are deceived by the fat which it is claimed covers a multitude of defects, and that, as a consequence, the animals of the best type and those best suited for breeding purposes and the improvement of the race fail to win the prizes. Our opinion is that in these days there is very little ground for the apprehension over which these writers are worrying. There was a time, some thirty years ago, when the expression of such a grievance might have found a response in the minds of advanced breeders and feeders, when heating corn or pea meal was supposed to be the only feed that would put an animal in sufficiently high condition to stand a chance of winning in a showing, when patchy rumps and ribs with rolls of fat on them as large as a man's arm, and covered with a hard hide, and dry, harsh handling hair, were not uncommon accompaniments of show cattle; and when the hogs exhibited were lumps of lard, being made as fat as they could be and live, their jaws being so heavy that in some cases these prevented them eating their feed from a

trough, their meals being served in the form of balls, which were dropped into the mouth of the drowsy porker by his attendant, and a pillow had to be supplied him to rest his weary head on and to save him from suffocation. That this is no over-drawn picture not a few living witnesses can testify. Under such feeding and treatment it was not strange that in a few years a large proportion of the animals became, like extinct volcanoes, burnt out, and incapable of reproducing their kind. Those were the days, too, when judges of stock at some of the leading exhibitions were nominated by members of the board of directors representing the districts for which they were elected, and men were honored by being appointed judges at the Provincial Fair on classes of stock they had never bred or handled, and in some cases had never seen or heard of before. A case is on record where a judge appointed to pass upon Southdown sheep enquired of a friend on passing by the pens, "What do they c'a they wee black-faced things?"

But the world has been moving, progress has been made, and we have advanced a long way past this state of things, though some writers do not seem to realize the fact. The judges for our leading exhibitions are now nominated by the breeders' associations, and are selected because of their fitness for the work, their experience in breeding and handling the classes of stock they are invited to judge, and their knowledge of the type of animals which meet the demands of the market and the times. Men so qualified are not likely to be led into the mistake of giving preference to an over-fed or abnormally fat animal, lacking in quality and smoothness, if such should be presented for competition, which is a rare occurrence in these days. Breeders and feeders too have been progressing in their methods of preparing their stock for exhibition, and have been mixing their meals with brains and bran, and with barley, oats and oil cake, and giving them the necessary exercise to develop their muscle, strengthen their bone, and build up a robust and vigorous constitution. The result is that the show stock of the present day, as a rule, are smoothly turned, having a large proportion of natural lean flesh of the best quality, evenly distributed over the carcass, and standing on strong, straight legs, of a good quality of bone, all of which are indications of usefulness, vigor, and endurance. Animals prepared in this way for exhibition are by no means unfitted for successful breeding; but, with judicious treatment after the show season is over, will be in a condition to produce offspring abounding in health and calculated to honor their generation. Indeed, as a matter of fact, the prize-winners in all classes of stock in the last few years have been largely the produce of show animals, as the records will attest, and we can point to instances where bulls that were, in the hands of judicious feeders—prize-winners for years and champions on many occasions—have proved active, healthy, and useful breeders up to twelve and fifteen years, and to show cows that produced strong and vigorous calves up to the same age and older. We have also knowledge of sweepstakes boars that have lived and served their generation as breeders of prize-winners up to ten years of age.

We have no desire to pose as the advocate of overfeeding—it is ill-judged and unprofitable from every point of view—but we strongly favor liberal feeding of breeding and working stock, as well as of show animals, provided it is wisely and judiciously done, believing that it is only by this means that the best possibilities of any race of animals can be brought out, either in respect to conformation and healthfulness of all stock, or to practical work in the case of the dairy cow, to the production of wool and mutton in sheep, or of the best quality of meat in what is called the bacon hog.

We have no sympathy with the idea promulgated by some persons, that the rules of the fairs should require that stock be shown in ordinary breeding condition. There would be little in such an exhibition to inspire enthusiasm, the show would largely lose its charm for visitors; besides, it would be impracticable to draw a line and say "thus far and no farther," for it is well known that some animals are slow, hard feeders, requiring twice as much feed and time to get into presentable condition as others. The advance column of feeders are doing good work in harmonizing science with intelligent and successful practice, and we only wish the rank and file would more generally join in the forward march, for we

are fully persuaded there is infinitely more reason to deprecate the extent to which under-feeding is being practiced than is overfeeding. The men who feed well are those who take the most interest and pride in their stock and who learn from experience and observation how intelligent is the connection between good breeding and good feeding in obtaining the best results, which can only be done by keeping the animals at all times in a thrifty and improving condition.

STOCK.

Sheep in Small Flocks Profitable.

To the Editor FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

I believe that the number of sheep in the Province has decreased somewhat in the last few years. I have found numbers of farmers who at one time kept small flocks that have gone out of them, owing, generally, to the trouble that they have been to them; but these cases have invariably been in districts where wheat was king. There is, however, one thing noticeable, and that is that a very large percentage of farmers would like to keep a few sheep if they had things in shape for keeping them; the object in view being the small carcass of meat for home consumption, and the saving made by producing on the farm what must otherwise be bought during the summer months. I am, however, of the opinion that farmers and their families need to be educated to eat mutton, a very large percentage of these now growing up having eaten so little of it that they have not acquired a taste for it.

As to the wool paying for the keep of the average flock, it will no doubt do it some years, but this past season it would come very far behind. There is a very great difference between the price that farmers receive for their wool and what they have to pay for their yarn. I have taken wool to the mill that used to be in Rapid City, where they would buy your wool and sell yarn; at the figures that they paid and sold at it cost upwards of fifty cents for carding, spinning, and dyeing. Last year I made a trial shipment of 14 lbs. of wool to Morden woolen mills, as I heard their figures were reasonable. I sent the wool from Whitewater to Morden, and had the yarn sent from there to Winnipeg by express. The mill docked 50 per cent. for dirt—it was unwashed wool, but in good shape—and then charged 25 cents per lb. for carding, spinning, and dyeing, thus amounting to \$1.75. The expressage amounted to \$1.85. Had I sold the wool and bought the yarn at Winnipeg I would have been 50 cents ahead. I got yarn made from coarse wool, while I had sent to the mill pure Southdown. I give these figures to show how much the Manitoba farmer needs a cheap parcel post, the express companies' charges being exorbitant. This year I expect to get my wool carded and spun by the Silesians; I have sent them a little to get a sample of their work, but have not yet had it returned. I lately heard of a man who had just brought into the Province machinery for doing certain work, and was looking out for a power to run it. Such men ought to be encouraged.

I think most farmers can keep sheep advantageously by fencing a pasture for them, even where it is but two or three acres—just enough to keep a few sheep for home use. Now that wire is so cheap, this can be done even in the open prairie country at a figure that the profits on the sheep will warrant. Of course, where there is lumber to be had, it can be done more cheaply, but even then it often pays best to use some wire at the present prices.

It is the small flock on every farm rather than large flocks here and there that will tend to advance the sheep industry in Manitoba. Wolves are in some districts a great trouble, but a small flock kept in a pasture near the house, with a dog of stag or fox hound blood, will reduce losses from this cause to a minimum. It may be said that it takes considerable land in a prairie country to pasture even a small flock of sheep, but on most farms there are pieces of waste land lying a little low (if there are a few willows all the better, they make shelter) which, if seeded down with red-top, Canadian blue grass, white clover, etc., would produce pasture in a very different proportion to what the native grasses do.

I believe an export market would be a benefit to the Province, but we probably need more sheep before we can expect much of a market other than a local one. It seems a pity that with a climate so eminently suitable for sheep a large export trade in them is not carried on; for apart from any direct profit that may be in the sheep themselves, they are of such inestimable benefit as farm scavengers and manure-makers. It seems to me that there is no reason why we should not export sheep. If we can send cattle to the Old Country, why not send sheep? Our cattle there compete with cattle exported from other countries; our sheep would only come into direct competition with the sheep of the Old Country, for though ship loads of frozen mutton from the great wool-producing countries go to the English markets, it is of inferior quality, and is "only frozen mutton."

If we would work up an export trade, our aim should be to send over only sheep of superior quality. The old scrags which are drafted out of our flocks should be kept at home, and care taken