

(For the Farmer's Manual.)

LETTERS OF "A FARMER."

LETTER XV.

On Feeding Stock.—Various are the methods, and numerous the neglectful practices of feeding stock. The descriptions given by various Agricultural writers, are also doubtful, and frequently unapplicable to the farmers of this Province; but as it has been my intention in these letters, to recommend nothing beyond my own observations and experience, I shall propose some general rules for feeding, of which I have seen satisfactory proof.

And first, it should be borne in mind that all the food given to stock, which is not improving thereby, or making return either by labor or dairy, is a total loss to the owner, excepting in the article of manure, which will also be light and of less value while the stock continues lean. Ground provender is preferable to the grain for fattening horses and swine, but cattle being ruminating animals, do better with the corn on the cob and the oats in the sheaf. Grass being more easy in digestion than hay, is more fattening, which proves the necessity of animals feeding on dry hay, only being frequently supplied with good water. To feed altogether on good merchantable hay, is very expensive, but every considerable farmer has much valuable fodder that he cannot sell, and then he may be justifiable in feeding merchantable hay to make up the deficiency. To feed cattle with a very small quantity of succulent roots, such as the turnip, beet, or potato, and then no more hay than they will eat up, and look for a little more, is the best method of keeping the stock in good health, and much the cheapest for the owner. Hay to be used alone, will extend the animal's stomach to an enormous dimension, and cattle are as liable to dyspepsia as men, and in that state less benefit may be effected. The same case applies also to swine with raw potatoes in the autumn, they extend the bulk, but make no fat; but with the potatoes boiled, and a small quantity of grain or meal, the swine thrive well. Old potatoes fed to swine in the pasture in the months of June and July, pay better than at any other season of the year. Thus, while the pasture will not fatten them, nor the potatoes when used alone, both used together effect it. One acre of good meadow land will afford hay to feed a cow eight months in the stable, and it will afford pasture for her, if not mowed, for the three summer months. Horses fed on a small quantity of grain, and kept with a good appetite for hay, are always active and ready for any service; but too much hay makes them inactive, and too much grain ruins them.

To make stock of any kind fat, care must be taken that their food is abundant, nutritive, and easy of digestion, as may be easily discovered by their excrements, and their shelter should be quiet and comfortable. Swine, although apt to be very contentious, may always be quieted with plenty of food and plenty of room, in a warm nest.

Neat cattle should be so situated as to be in sight of, but not in fear of each other.

Beef cattle, fed with potatoes, turnips, or the mangel wurtzel, will not require more than half the hay they otherwise would, and their manure will be far more valuable.

The extra feed, that would make one pound of beef per day, would, if given to milch cows, increase their mess eight quarts per day, which, with ordinary management, would make a pound of butter. A strong reason in favor of the dairy—that which feeds two cows scantily, and perhaps both dry, might keep one well, that would give a good return of milk.

A little short feed for sheep is as useful to the fleece as manure to the field.

Every farmer raising a large quantity of potatoes, will have many bushels wholly unsaleable, but equally good for feeding. The system of boiling them for the swine, now seems very properly established, and it does best also to wash them before boiling—then they should be mixed with all the meal or bran that may be spared. As they generally lay quiet through the night, I have preferred giving them some dry grain for their supper. By being methodical in feeding, the animals become habituated to the method, and like the labourer, can understand by their own feelings when dinner time should arrive.

Farms so situated as to admit of a large vegetable cellar, free from water and frost, under the barn, have a decided advantage over others, and the owner will find a very great benefit derived from feeding succulent roots abundantly to the stock.

Mangel wurtzel or cow beets should be dug before the potatoes, because a part of the root growing above the ground is exposed to the frost; but the ruta baga, or indeed any kind of turnips, may remain in the ground until the snow comes, and be dug whenever the frost is out of the ground, without injuring them for the stock, excepting in the tops, which should always be considered a valuable fodder, particularly for cows giving milk.

Turnips and beets fed to cattle, should always pass through a cutting box, which may be made in various ways, and with little expense.

Animals sometimes lose their appetite, and do not thrive until they regain it, in which case care should be taken to change their diet. Swine accustomed to boiled potatoes, do better frequently to have a feed of raw potatoes, and when they are kept from the ground, they should frequently be fed with charcoal or rotten wood. Horses fed in the stable, should also be fed with raw potatoes frequently.

An animal that is well fed and kept fat the first year, may easily be kept in good condition afterwards, calves particularly, if kept fat until they are weaned, and then have three months in a good pasture, require very little care and expense afterwards, and I have seldom known one that was not injured the first half year, to fail in making a fine animal. When an animal is in good order, it requires less food to keep him so than it does to keep a lean animal of the same size from growing worse. Ill shaped animals are generally those that have been ill-fed when young, and the best young stock is generally produced from the best fed animals.

I am pleased to see the Devonshire and Durham cattle imported, and Dishley and Leicester breeds of sheep, confident that it arises from that spirit of enterprise so much needed; but I had much rather see my countrymen competing with Lord Durham and the Devonshire farmers in the improvement of our own stock, from a firm belief that we are fully able to do so. And although we have no speculating Noblemen willing to give us a thousand pounds for a bull, yet we may hope for a fair remunerating price, which is always the best for

A FARMER.

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PLANTS.—Experienced agriculturists state, that plants, whether in garden, field or forest, if in rows should be placed in the directions of north and south, in order to admit the sun's rays, daily, on both sides of the row.