

ration for an ordinary farm-horse. What are these articles worth on the farm? The straw is valueless, hay is bought anywhere in the country for \$6.00 the 100 bundles, and from that must be deducted profit and carriage to get at the price on the farm; oats at 1 cent a pound to sell, must bear a like diminution. Altogether, it seems to me that from 12 cents to 15 cents is about a fair thing. And how long does a horse get fed, on our average farms, in this extravagant way? Four months? And part of this time he will be at pasture. Finally, I cannot see how a horse fairly fed, with a decent allowance made for interest, shoeing, wear and tear, &c., can cost a farmer more than one dollar a week—\$52.00 a year.

Thus, the man's wages, &c., being taken at \$1.00 a day, the weekly cost of a team and their driver will be \$8.00, to this let another dollar be added for wear and tear, &c., of the plough, harness, &c. (5 cents would be plenty), and supposing a fair day's work to be  $1\frac{1}{2}$  acre, the cost to the farmer would seem to be exactly one dollar an acre.

*Cost of horse-keep.*—On this subject I notice there is a great difference of opinion, and this is likely to be the case so long as the leading item, viz., the cost of horse labour, is supposed to vary from nothing to 3s. a day.

As is usually the case, the truth lies between these two extremes. More than twenty years ago I was taught to value the work of a farm horse at the latter figure. During almost all these years I have farmed in a northern county, where farm horses as a rule are well kept; mine looked at least as well and as fit for work as my neighbours', and I have often calculated their cost, and, including everything, I never could get beyond £18 a year, or a fraction under 1s. a day. I know I shall be jumped on "for not deducting Sundays and non-working days, but I prefer not to do so, as it at once admits an uncertain element into the calculation, and the absolute certainty remains that I am obliged to keep and feed each horse 365 days in each year. I adopted the usual practice and turned my horses out for five or six months, according to the season, during which time, when doing hard work, they got corn in the daytime, and when not wanted, as, for instance, when all hands were turnip singling, and sometimes in hay and corn harvest, when all the horses were not employed, those that were idle were much better in the field at grass, in my opinion, than standing in the stable. Anyhow, the system worked well. I had from sixty to seventy acres of fallow every year, including forty to fifty acres of roots, the strongest land bare fallow. I kept four pairs and an odd horse. This shows that I was not over-horsed, and further details are unnecessary. I do not wish to lay down the law as to what the cost of horse labour should be. This will vary, like the cost of anything else, according to circumstances.

I only wish to protest against these loose and misleading estimates of cost, as applied to agricultural operations in general, of which horse-labour is a good instance. *To charge a profit on hay and corn, and in various ways make out that a farm-horse cost £50 a year, can lead to no good result.*"

JAS EDWARDS.

*Hampshire-downs.*—I see by the English papers that this breed of sheep is still keeping up its reputation. At Britford fair, August 8th, prices were \$3.00 a head higher than last year. Seventy thousand sheep were penned, and all were sold. Mr. Pinniger's best hundred ewes fetched \$17.00 a head, and the best and second best rams in the fair—lamb of the year, if you please—sold, respectively for \$500.00 and \$350. The average for Mr. Moore's nine lamb-rams was \$206.00! Mr. Coles' rams averaged \$203.00 a head, the top-price being \$460.00. (1)

(1) At Salisbury fair, August 18th, wether-lambs fetched \$13.00 a piece.

A. R. J. F.

*Canadian mutton.*—While Dutch and Danish mutton runs English mutton very close, it seems Canadian sheep are a long way behind. This will always be the case as long as we persist in sending over Leicesters and Cotswold—long-wools in fact—which as the subjoined extract says, "only affect our third rate values." The Kents, mentioned in the report, are a medium sized, white faced breed, kept hardly anywhere else except on Romney Marsh. They are, as indeed they must be to endure the bleak winds of that desolate flat, very hardy, and being "rich and juicy in flesh," are great favourites in the country for a couple of months in the heat of summer, after lambs are gone out of season. In the winter months they are not much regarded.

"Sheep have sold remarkably well for all descriptions short of fat ewes, which are now coming on to the market. In the Metropolitan Market on Monday the supply was short, and choice 60 to 70 lb. Down wethers made up to 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ d., whilst this advance of  $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per lb. was general for all useful wethers and maiden ewes. There were 1,770 Canadian sheep on offer which sold slowly at about 7 $\frac{3}{4}$ d., whilst the 520 Danish sheep made up to 9d., a good clearance was made and the trade was brisk throughout. At Deptford there were 2,720 Dutch sheep, which met a good trade at from 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. to 9d., and in some cases 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. was paid, which shows how keenly these sheep compete with our best stock; whilst the Canadian things, which have the advantage of our open market, can only affect our third-rate values. These Dutch sheep are of the character and quality of our Kents; and being like them, grass sheep pure and simple, they are now just coming into their best season; they offal considerably, in comparison with Downs, but the flesh is rich and juicy at this time of year, and the bone is small. At Ashford on Tuesday there was a fast trade at from 9d. to 9 $\frac{1}{4}$ d. for choice Downs, and up to 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. for Kents, with 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. paid for useful ewe mutton. Later markets have been very firm."

One special feature in the leading sheep markets of England seems to have entirely escaped the observation of writers on agricultural matters on this side of the Atlantic. I mean the value attached to size—inverse ratio, of course—While a neat Down is worth 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. = 19 cts a pound, a lumbering Cotswold or Lincoln will not bring more than 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. = 16 cts. Neat, small joints, putting aside quality, are most in request. The perfect leg of mutton—I do not mean the gigot, i. e. the leg and part of the loin—weighs 9 pounds.

*Permanent pastures.*—I often remarked in this publication, as well as in conversation with inquirers, how curious it was that our English Downs, on the chalk, though fed off by sheep for centuries, show no signs of exhaustion. A question was put lately to the editor of our leading English agricultural paper, the Agricultural Gazette, the purport of which was as follows:

"Would old pasture land, stocked with sheep and horses, as their sole provision, improve or deteriorate?"

The answer, condensed, was, "that the pasture would improve, though the improvement would be much slower than if the stock received cake, corn or hay in addition."

Lawes has shown that there is a steady increase of nitrogen in pasture-lands, probably accumulated from air and subsoil. Pasture is in a condition of comparative rest. The Vale of Aylesbury grazing lands, which for centuries have turned out innumerable fat beasts of the largest size, unaided by adventitious food, show no signs of deterioration and our own Gloucestershire pastures which, without manure or imported adjuncts, send out tons of cheese and hundreds of calves every year, are still flourishing, though they are known to have been in grass for at least five hundred years.