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TOPICS FOR THE WEEK

Agricultural News and Comments.

The butter industry is assuming somewhat large proportions in Argentina. The country is now exporting over 15,000 cases of butter per annum, whereas a few years back almost all the butter used there was imported. An English capitalized concern has bought out a factory already established in the Province of Buenos Ayres and hopes to increase the output in a large degree.

The total exports of butter from Denmark during the year 1897 were 132,000,000 Danish pounds (907 Danish pounds are equal to 1,000 English pounds), or fully 11,000,000 pounds more than in 1896. About 4,000,000 pounds of the exported butter were packed in tins; the remainder, 128,000,000 pounds, in casks of the usual type. Of this quantity more than 102,000,000 pounds were produced in Denmark, 5,000,000 were transhipped in Danish ports without being landed there, and 21,000,000 were landed there and reshipped to other countries by Danish exporters. About 18,000,000 pounds of these butters were of Swedish origin and 3,000,000 pounds of Finnish.

Spain imported during 1896, 24,402,183 eggs, principally from Morocco and Portugal, and exported 6,920,983, principally to Great Britain. Galicia, in the northern part of Spain, is the only exporting province. The southern provinces are the chief importers. Eggs sell in Spain for about 30 cents (2 pesetas) a dozen, when fresh, and for about 22 cents when more than four days old.

No fewer than 739,534 animals were received at the Metropolitan Cattle Market, London, England, last year, made up of 83,789 cattle, 635,596 sheep, 2,610 calves, 4,628 pigs, and 12,911 other animals. In the foreign cattle market there were landed and slaughtered 223,628 beeves and 286,990 sheep. From the United States there was an increase of 5,141 beeves and a decrease of 4,075 sheep; from Canada an increase of 4,556 cattle and 8,544 sheep; while from Argentina there was an increase in both—3,326 cattle and 21,313 sheep. As many as 695 vessels discharged cattle and sheep at the market during the year.

There will be a large increase in the make of sugar from sugar-beets in the United States this season. Several other states besides those which

started last year will have sugar-beet factories started this season. The movement is a pretty general one and should result in a very large increase in the output of beet sugar. There has been some agitation along this line in Ontario, but so far nothing definite has been accomplished. If the business can be made a success in the Northern States there should be no doubt about its being successful here providing the sugar can be manufactured at a price that will enable it to compete with the bounty-fed sugars of Europe.

The great success which American trainers have with trotters and pacers is attributed to their knowledge of foot balancing or shoeing in such a way as to bring out the best speed of which a horse is capable. Great stress is laid upon the matter of shoeing. A very slight deviation in foot balancing may prevent a horse from doing his very best. Instances are given where a colt which had never beaten 2.10 was made to pace his mile in 2.7 $\frac{3}{4}$ by having the shoes removed and the angle of the foot changed very slightly by a rasp.

Italy is quite a large exporter of cheese. It is estimated that from three and a quarter to three and a half million pounds' worth are sent to foreign lands annually. The cheese exported is nearly all fancy cheese, and a considerable quantity of it goes to England. The chief brands of fancy cheese made are the Parmesan, Gorgonzola, Stacchmo of Lombardy, the Fontina of the Valley of the Aosta, and the Cacio Cavallo of Southern Italy. The first two named please the English buyer best.

In some centres it is expected that the extension of the Trans-Siberian railway in Russia will tend to increase the wheat production of that country by opening up new districts. But good authorities claim that such will not be the case. The three leading cereals of Russia are wheat, rye, and oats. Of these rye comes first in regard to production, oats second, and wheat third. The wheat fields of Siberia are not numerous or extensive, and where wheat is grown in the largest quantities the railway does not reach. The surplus wheat of Western Siberia goes only to the rural districts to supply the deficit of the country. The portion of the country suitable for wheat has long been under cultivation.

In Ohio the average wages of farm hands per month with board is \$14.30; without board per month it is \$20.80; and per day without board, 97 cents. In Vermont the average wages of farm hands is from \$18 to \$20 per month with board; and from \$25 to \$27 per month without board. Farm wages is reported to be higher in the New England States than in any other portion of the Union.

There are only three conditions on which the broad tires on wagons draw heavier than the narrow tires—when the road is sloppy, muddy, or sticky on the surface and firm and hard underneath; when the surface is covered with a very deep loose dust and is hard underneath, and when the mud is very deep and so sticky that it adheres to the wheels of both kinds of wagons. These are, as a rule, exceptional conditions, and in the great majority of cases the broad tires will pull easier than the narrow ones.

The wheat yield in New Zealand is all around better than was anticipated. In some sections the dry weather has resulted in a light yield. In the

Argentine farmers are holding out for high prices, though there appears to be plenty of wheat in the country. It is expected that the total shipments for the year from the river Platte will be about 5,000,000 quarters. Less damage than was expected seems to have resulted from the January rains, and the quality is likely to keep up very well.

Good Roads.

In a few weeks farmers will be busy putting in their allotted time of statute labor. But should the term "busy" be applied to such labor? From our own experience in performing statute labor, a few years ago, it was anything else but a busy task. Those who engaged in this work did not busy themselves as much in trying to do a lawful day's work and to improve the condition of the roadways as in endeavoring to see who could tell the biggest yarn and who could get in the day's time with the least exertion. Whether the same motives guide people in performing statute labor to-day or not we are not prepared to state definitely. We fancy, however, that a great deal of it is performed in the same "don't care" and half-hearted way. It may be, perhaps, that the agitation in behalf of good roads during the past ten years has had the effect of imbuing those to whom the task of performing statute labor in this country is committed with more patriotic zeal and a desire to do their utmost to secure better roads, and that, instead of a desire to do his share of the work at as little sacrifice to himself as possible, everyone who performs statute labor endeavors to put in a lawful and a faithful day's work. If so, all well and good; but from what we learn from those interested we are inclined to think a great many follow in the old way.

If, however, the statute labor has been performed in a "don't care" manner in the past, it does not follow that the same method of performing it should be continued. We would like to see, this year, a special effort made by everyone to perform a lawful day's work, and, if need be, to do a little more than his share in getting the statute labor done. The statute labor system is in disrepute in many quarters because of its past record in the way of securing good roads. True, there are other methods by which a great deal more could be done towards securing good roads, but they have one chief fault, and that is they are too expensive. For cheapness and small expenditure of money the statute labor system, if rightly looked after, cannot be beaten as a means for securing better roads. What it needs is some fountain head from which should emanate each year a fund of practical information and systematic instruction in regard to the making of good roads, and, coupled with this, a director-general whose duty it should be to see that the instructions sent out from headquarters were carried out by the councils of the municipalities and put into practice by those performing the statute labor work of the province.

It may be said that we now have such an officer in the person of the Provincial Road Instructor. True, we have, and he is rendering and has rendered excellent service in stimulating a greater zeal and more enthusiasm for good roads. But he cannot do what he might do if he had the active co-operation of every municipality in the province in endeavoring to put his teachings into practical effect in the way of securing better roads. A great many municipalities have taken advantage of his services and made great improvement in the roads under their control by following Mr. Campbell's directions. But what is wanted is a more