

CANADA'S SHEEP INDUSTRY

(By E. S. BATES in "The Journal of Commerce")

CHAPTER VIII. THE KARAKULE SHEEP

The original home of the Karakule sheep is in Bokhara, Persia, where the occupation of raising sheep is well adapted to the nomadic temperament of the people. Primarily the sheep are raised for their fur, ranging from the expensive Persian lamb fur to the cheapest qualities of real Astrakhan fur, and so far its chief value is that production. The industry is carried on in a haphazard manner in Persia with little attention paid to any defined methods of either breeding or husbanding, but the Karakule's natural hardiness and tendencies have maintained the breed in spite of the methods and make it a valuable adjunct to the world's fur trade.

The Karakule fur is produced from the skin of the lamb. As in the case with most breeds of sheep the proportion of premature births is somewhat large, and it is from the lamb prematurely born that the black, glossy and superb fur used in the manufacture of most expensive cloaks, is obtained and which forms the most valuable of the Karakule furs. The Persian lamb fur of commerce is obtained from the lamb, born at maturity, between birth and five days after. The pelt from the lamb during the following five days produces the fur known as Astrakhan, a fur with a longer and slightly less curled hair than the real Persian lamb, while the cheaper Karakule fur is obtained from the pelts of lambs during the later stages. Almost immediately the lambs are born, if the fur is curly and of good colour, they are sometimes provided with leather coverings (always so where the proper methods are followed), to prevent the wool from uncurling and becoming dirty. After the pelt is removed it is flayed in the shade. At all times the flank and leg parts of the pelt are saleable as Karakule fur, while the wool or hair of the full grown sheep is used as carpet and upholstery wool.

During the past twenty years Karakule sheep have been imported into various European countries and experiments conducted in the cross breeding with the English types, Leicester, Cotswold, Southdown and other breeds. The effort was to produce a breed adapted to western conditions; to produce a fur of equal or better than that produced in Bokhara, and the possibility has been amply demonstrated. In 1908, an importation of Karakules from Bokhara and Russia was made into the United States and a year or so later, for various reasons, this herd along with later importations, was brought north and located in Prince Edward Island, where the fox-ranching industry has met with such success. Two farms were started, one in Prince Edward Island and the other at Lawrenceville, Annapolis County, Nova Scotia, and although some difficulty was occasioned in that our customs regulations forbade the importation of animals from the Far East on account of the diseases prevalent in those parts, the cross-bred stock was allowed. Another herd, refused admittance, was located in Newfoundland, and very successful experimental work has been conducted on these ranches during the past few years. The crossing of the Karakule with the Canadian breeds has been found to be successful, a good proportion of the lambs born being of excellent colour, and lustre and possessing a very fine curl. It has been demonstrated that only a small proportion of Karakule strain is sufficient to produce good results, so true does the strain hold, so that it only remains now to find out the best type for crossing, which will be accomplished by experimentation, and to establish a recognized breed.

The raising of Karakules offers an attractive opportunity to the Canadian sheep breeders. Canadian climate has been found most adapted to the production of an excellent stock. The importation of Karakule furs into America is very heavy, and the possibilities of producing the fur on a profitable basis in large enough quantities to make it available to the masses are great. The mutton of the half-bred or Karakule strain sheep is of excellent quality, tasty, fine-grained and rivals the best Canadian breeds of sheep in this respect.

Another important feature is the fact that the percentage of loss in lambs is very slight. Whereas with ordinary sheep the percentage of prematurely born lambs sometimes runs as high as 20 to 30 per cent, all of which are lost, the prematurely born lamb of Karakule strain is most valuable. This in itself is an important inducement. On the other hand, the wool of the pure-bred Karakule cross-bred has a very large market for carpet and upholstery stock and commands a price proportionate to the wool of other breeds.

The industry is in its infancy in this country. It has not yet been taken up

by more than half a dozen sheep breeders. A good deal of experimental work has yet to be done. But it appears assured that the Karakule has a big future in Canada.

CHAPTER IX.

Advice to The Beginner in the Selection of Breeding Stock

(By T. Reg. Arkell, Chief Sheep and Goat Division, Dominion Department of Agriculture)

Many men think that, after they have spent a few months in learning the theory of sheep husbandry, they are capable of pursuing practical management with an assurance of easy success. They have possibly learned the symptoms of diseases with their remedies and in detail scientific management, but exigencies, always arise for which they are unprepared, and which probably, when studying the subject, they did not deem worthy of their consideration. It is strict attention to little things in sheep raising that so generally lead to a great success. No one should enter extensively into the business without having had a thorough practical experience. Otherwise it is best for him to commence in a smaller fashion. As his flock increases in size so will his experience and he will learn for himself the proper methods to apply to every condition that may arise.

Too many beginners display an over-confidence in their prowess and knowledge of the sheep business. This makes them the prey to the salesman who sees no need of correcting mistakes that the beginner may make in the purchase of his breeding stock. Most generally this class of novice wishes to make personal selection of the animals, and, if his ideals respecting type are somewhat astray, as is by no means infrequently the case, he gets in his flock many sheep which he would be better without. Had he been sensibly disposed and confessed his ignorance of many points of breed type, the salesman, unless he were most unscrupulous, would have aided him in choosing animals that would prove valuable to him. Few breeders who have any sort of reputation at all to sustain will take a rank advantage of a man who ingeniously leaves the selection of his purchase with them. In fact, many breeders state that they much prefer a buyer to make a personal choice than sell by description through the mail, since in the latter case they feel compelled, in order to uphold their honesty and trustworthiness, to send a better animal than the price really calls for. With personal selection the seller's ability is limited, since he does not feel himself responsible for what the purchaser does.

Selection of Breed or Type

Choice of breed is the first difficulty that besets the beginner. The common question with those entering the sheep business is: What is the best breed? To that the only answer that can be given is that all breeds are good when adapted to the conditions under which they will be subjected in the district where the beginner's farm or ranch is located, and meet local requirements. The selection of breed also depends largely upon the individual taste of the shepherd and the object he has in view in raising them. In Canada success can be obtained with any of the popular breeds produced here, but no person should ever commence raising a breed for which he knows he cannot obtain a ready sale. Perhaps his means and conditions do not warrant him to enter into the production of pure-breds. If he is breeding sheep merely for mutton purposes, high-class grades will suffice, yet even in buying grades he should take care to select only those possessing a good mutton conformation. Many farmers think that, since they own simply grades, "any old sheep" at all will produce good enough results in the flock, and, therefore, the more cheaply they can buy the better. This is false economy, for very frequently they obtain in their flock animals that do not pay for the expense of their keep.

Uniformity of Type

Unity of type in the flock should be the direct aim of the breeder. This applies to grades as well as pure-breds, and refers to the selection of a type of sheep, possessing similar mutton and wool characteristics. With pure-breds this feature is especially important. In a flock of sheep where several types obtain, choice of a suitable ram is most difficult. Besides, disparity in this respect detracts from the general appearance of the flock and gives the buyer or casual observer an unfavorable opinion. Every breeder should aspire to produce a distinctive type. He should endeavor to breed a class of sheep possessing characteristics that, wherever the animals are, they will be recognized as his breeding.

But to attain this he should never uphold some fancy character in preference to utility features. No features should be given undue prominence beyond another, especially one that is purely ornamental. The establishment of some ultra-fashionable characteristic has at times become an obsession with many breeders of pure-bred sheep, and this sin (for it cannot be called anything else) must be avoided. The ultimate destination of most pure-bred rams is at the head of grade flocks, and their utility features should only be taken into consideration.

The beginner should study well and become familiar with the type of breed he has selected. He must be able to recognize undesirable features and disqualification. These he should endeavor to preclude from his flock, and to this end he should practice a rigorous culling every year. Individuals which do not possess the merits that his ideal calls for should be banished from his flock. Sheep having grave defects of character in type should not be used for breeding purposes. The absolutely perfect sheep, however, is still unknown, but every breeder should essay to approach as well as possible to what he considers perfection of type. Therefore, he should practice judicious care in the initial selection of his foundation stock and in his subsequent breeding operations.

THE TURN OF THE TIDE

When the war began the Allied forces realized pretty clearly that Germany's preparedness gave her a great initial advantage which would probably enable her to win some striking victories in the early part of the campaign, but they reasoned that in the end the numerical, financial and naval supremacy of the Allies would inevitably make itself felt. A few optimists, who did not realize just how extensive and thorough had been Germany's preparation for war, had visions of a short campaign in which the Allies would drive the Germans before them in headlong rout to Berlin. But, these cheerful optimists were very few in number.

On the other side the Germans were supremely confident. They knew the completeness and extent of their own preparations; they knew that their army of trained men, the greatest the world had ever seen, was superior both in numbers and equipment to anything which the Allies could muster, and they exulted in the certainty of a speedy and complete victory. And they were so sure that they actually had settled the terms which they were going to impose upon their vanquished foes. About the only fly in the ointment was the British fleet, and they believed that a judicious use of the submarine and the Zeppelin would so reduce the British superiority in ships that the German fleet would soon be able to sail out and give it battle upon even terms, and then Britannia's sceptre would pass into German hands, and the British Empire would have passed away. This was the German dream.

And now, after fifteen months of fiercest fighting, there is no sign of surrender upon either side. It happened, as the Allies expected, that Germany won certain successes in the initial stages of the struggle, and her completeness of preparation, even after months of struggle, gave her such manifest superiority to her Russian antagonist that she was able to drive the Russian army back into Russian territory, and she is still holding it there. And now, after the long fifteen months' struggle, the German army in the west still holds French and Belgian territory, in the east it holds Russian territory, and in the south it is fighting on Serbian soil; so that after this most colossal of all contests this nation of 60,000,000 assisted by Austria with its 40,000,000, is able to hold its own with the Allied nations representing in Europe alone over 200,000,000 people, and the German soil is still intact, Germany is uninvaded, and she is yet able to meet her opponents upon fairly equal terms. This is truly a marvellous feat, and demonstrates very clearly just what advantage lies in a thorough preparation for war.

But when we have said this we have said all that can be said of the success of the German campaign. The bright visions of the early days have faded, and Germany is now fighting grimly with her back to the wall, putting forth desperate efforts to defeat her foes, and succeeding only in postponing the day of her own defeat. In spite of all her great strength Germany is a beaten foe. Her efforts to weaken the British navy have utterly failed, and to-day that navy has drawn a cordon around Germany which has almost strangled her seaborne foreign trade, while the German navy, the pride of the Kaiser's heart and the weapon with which he was to beat Britain into submission, hides closely in German harbors, afraid to face the foe. It is true a great sea fight would probably mean annihilation for the German fleet, but some would prefer even that to inaction.

And while it is true that Germany is still holding both the Allies on the west and the Russians, her soldiers are no longer fighting with the assurance of success. Their attempts to crush the Allied and the Russian armies have so far been failures, and now their foes are simply awaiting the wearing down process, knowing that Germany has shot her bolt, and while she may resist most fiercely for months to come, her armies are on the down grade and she must ultimately perish from exhaustion.

From time to time rumors come also of internal troubles in Germany, and there is no doubt that the blockade is pinching her severely, but the real facts are not revealed. We are told that the people are still buoyed up with hopes of a German victory, and we are informed also that unless Germany does win, and that so decisively that she can demand what indemnity she pleases of her foes, she must become bankrupt. There is no doubt that there is only too much truth in some of these sinister rumors and it leads us to wonder just what will happen when the great war-tide swings back across the borders of Germany. What will happen then to the Kaiser and his advisers, who alone must bear the responsibility for the awful war? Will German patience have reached the breaking point, or will it still be content to submit calmly to the mailed fist? The day of retribution may be yet a long way off, but it is surely coming, and it may be nearer than we at present realize.

PROHIBITION AT HOME

To the Editor:— We have been quoting largely from the United States statistics showing the perfectly wonderful results that follow prohibition because out of forty-eight states, eight have had prohibition long enough to give conclusive evidence and also because reliable statistics are available every year.

It may not be generally known that Canada has given for the extent to which it has been tried just as satisfactory results as in the United States. We have only one Province, Prince Edward Island, entirely under prohibition but several others have had sufficient prohibition to show very definite results.

When Prince Edward Island prohibited the retail sale of liquor it had more insane than any other province in Canada. On account of its reputation and its insular position it had attracted a large number of patients from out side of the Island. This fact is still held up by the liquor interests as evidence that prohibition increases insanity which shows to what lengths they will go to defend the traffic. The following statistics for the older Provinces show that there is very little difference in the insanity record because there is very little difference in the amount under prohibition. The new Provinces are not counted because at this time Saskatchewan and Alberta had no asylums and the others were young.

Per ten thousand Nova Scotia had 33.6; Ontario 34.9; Quebec 32.4; New Brunswick 26.7. When we come to the statistics of drunkenness and crime they give a smashing blow to the traffic in liquor. In 1913 Nova Scotia had 8.0 convictions for drunkenness per thousand; British Columbia had 21.3.

The criminal record is still more remarkable, the latest census report gives the following convictions for crime per thousand population, Prince Edward Island 1.1; New Brunswick 3.8; Ontario 25.5; Manitoba 27.9; Alberta 40.0; British Columbia 42.1. These figures show that the wettest Provinces have nearly forty times as many convictions for crime as the driest one and the convictions decrease with the amount under prohibition or local option. You would think after that, that the liquor defenders would shut up but they won't.

H. ARNOTT, M.B., M.C.P.S.

AVIATOR FLEW TO MASONIC MEETING

London, Nov. 24.—An interesting feature of last night's meeting of Canada Lodge A. F. and A. M. was the initiation into Free Masonry of an aviator who had flown from the north for the purpose of being present. This was Captain Kenneth Edgar Kennedy, of Sherbrooke, Que., who has a reputation as a Canadian Arctic explorer. He is at present with the Flying Corps in England, but has done good work at the front. One narrow escape which he had recently was unique. A shell burst several hundred feet below him, and one fragment was hurled upward breaking part of his propeller and hitting Captain Kennedy on the chest. The impact wounded him, but he managed to reach the ground safely. Captain Kennedy sent the fragments of shell to the War Office on request, but asks for its return as a souvenir.

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