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Editorial.

The Gathering of Breeders of Live Stock.

Next week the annual live-stock conventions will be held in the city of Winnipeg, meetings which promise to be of more than ordinary interest to the farmers, as well as the breeders of pure-bred live-stock. The Shorthorn breeders of Manitoba and Eastern Assiniboia will, it is expected, organize, with a view to looking after their interests in the Dominion Shorthorn Breeders' Association, and to hear what took place at the last annual meeting of that body, as well as to hear the reasons why the grant to Manitoba shows was cut down, and no provision made whereby the members resident in Manitoba or the Territories could select their representatives to the annual meeting at Toronto.

The live-stock industry in the West is at a critical stage in its history, due to the low prices, Mexican cattle, etc., and animated discussions on this subject are expected.

The report of the delegates to the National Convention at Ottawa last March will also be given, and no doubt interesting discussions take place thereon. The question of records promises to be a live one, and people interested in the pure breeds of live stock, such as we have in Western Canada, cannot afford to miss these meetings. The Aberdeen-Angus men want a record that will be a credit to the breeders, the breed, and the country, and the knife may have to fall on some pedigrees. We hope not; great damage was done to Shorthorn interests years ago by ruling out certain families, the result of work by a clique, and the A.-A. men cannot afford to repeat the mistake.

The arrangements for the educational part of the programme are better than ever before, the work to be done being a distinct advance over that of former years. Besides live stock of the pure breeds, there will be talks upon carcasses and demonstrations by cutting such up so that those attending will have all the advantages of a winter fair, minus the prize tickets.

Now is the time for the breeders to widen out, and extend their sphere of influence, and we submit that it would be well to move around a little and hold the live-stock conventions at Brandon in 1906, and alternate between there and Winnipeg from year to year. There are many residents in Eastern Assiniboia who are linked by reason of their geographical situation to the Manitoba live-stock associations more than to the Territorial bodies at Calgary, and who, therefore, could attend at Brandon at a less expense than is possible if they had to go to Winnipeg or Calgary.

The question of a spring sale of live stock under the Association's auspices may be mooted. We opine, however, that better results are to be expected from breeders' combination sales than under the other method.

We earnestly hope that there will be a big turn-out; aye, we urge every breeder of pure-bred stock to get to the convention. The programme is an attractive one, the subjects listed important, the speakers expected men of note, and we trust that each man attending will feel that these are his meetings, and that he will be prepared to take part, either by suggestions or in the discussions.

The aid from the Dominion Government to these meetings has rendered the educational work possible, and if the breeders want this valuable work continued, it is up to them to say so by their presence.

Some Work the Experimental Farms Might Undertake.

In previous issues we have drawn attention to the work of the Dominion Experimental Farms west of the Great Lakes, and have suggested what would be, in our view, improvements in the way of the administration of those farms, and have also voiced the needs of two sections (Alberta and Eastern B. C.) in the matter of providing additional farms. The great work of the farmers of the prairies is general farming and stock-raising. Other branches of agriculture, such as horticulture, dairying, etc., are subjects of minor importance at the present, and it is a decided mistake for a Government institution to emphasize the minor matters and, to a great extent, overlook the subjects of paramount importance to the farming community of Western Canada.

To be specific, we will mention experiments that should be started, the results of which farmers are needing right now to make use of to guide them in their work. That such experiments should be inaugurated no one will deny, and that they have not been started before this is evidence that the mind controlling the work of these farms has been content to try and keep even with Western agriculture, instead of leading the way, an attitude which tends to weaken the influence of these farms on the community, and gives opportunity to the unsympathetic townsman or member of Parliament (unfortunately, far too plentiful) to criticise the expenditures or even to question the need for such farms. Unless the farms are conducted with a view to help the farmer, we see little reason for their existence. Experimenting for the sake of experimenting is a fad, and a rut into which experimenters are apt to fall, unless jolted occasionally by the utilitarian, who insists on having results.

The feeding of horses is a matter for experiment, to determine what foods give best results at the least cost. The green oat sheaf is a staple food for live stock, but there is practically no accurate information to be had as to how that feed compares with the straws, chaff, wild hay or hay from the cultivated grasses as horse feed, or whether it would pay to cut the feeds mentioned. This experiment might be enlarged by adding bran or finding out the rational quantity to use for summer and winter feeding. The use of barley as a horse feed might be experimented with, with a view of finding an economical ration or substitute in years when oats are more or less a failure.

Experiments with manure are needed, as many farmers are, as a result of diminishing crop returns, calling loudly for instruction as how best to restore the former fertility. Such experiments might be made in conjunction with barley or grass as a substitute for the bare fallow, and the evidence from such experiments might be made incontrovertible if rotation trials were made part of the experiment. Five or ten acre plots handled under a four and six year rotation, including in that rotation, a bare fallow on one plot, barley and manure on another, grass and manure on another, and a fourth with corn, rape and potatoes, would be interesting and profitable to all. Rape might also be used as a catch crop on the bare fallow to discover its use as pasture, compared with a sowing of wheat, to be eaten down in the late summer, and the soil firmed thereby.

The growing of clover has received practically no attention. True, a few plots have been grown from year to year, but experiments pointing the way to successful clover-growing, under conditions which the farmer must meet, are singularly absent. Wheat needs nitrogen. Clover takes nitrogen from the air and renders it available to the wheat-grower. Clover is thus

one of the best soil restorers known to practical farmers and scientific investigators, and we submit that in view of such well-known facts extensive experiments should be conducted with this legume, even to the extent of growing it for seed, in order to get seed more suited to the climate. The fodder value of clover hay is well known to eastern farmers, but not so well known to those whose farming has been confined to the prairie. Its value should be demonstrated to the newcomers, whether born here or immigrants from distant lands. Clover is also a great temporary pasture plant, and has a place where hogs are pastured, but as we have stated before, the Western experiment stations need to show that the use of this plant is desirable and profitable. Clover experiments, with and without a nurse crop, seeded with wheat, with oats, with barely, on, at least, five-acre plots, and treated as farmers must treat this crop in order to hold their own financially, need to be instituted. Last season we saw, at one of the farms, a stand of clover promising well with barley (a light sowing) as a nurse crop, but the nurse crop was, we believe, cut for hay. What farmer will grow barley for hay, when other and less expensive and better fodder crops are available? Besides, the real influence of the nurse crop on the clover catch was, by cutting at such an early date, not demonstrated. It is frequently claimed that the nurse crop absorbs the soil moisture, to the hurt of the young clover plant. Farmers, then, want to know the nurse crop that will do the least damage, and also need to know how best to handle the new catch after the nurse crop is removed. Speaking to Prof. Waldron of the efforts of the "Farmer's Advocate" to foster clover-growing in Manitoba, he stated that in North Dakota he fancied greater progress was to be hoped for from alfalfa (lucerne) than from red clover. Alfalfa, then, might be experimented with similarly, and compared with red clover.

The value of rape as a pasture or soiling crop for cattle, sheep and hogs needs to be shown by experiments at the farms. The Central Farm at Ottawa carries on such experiments, but a similar set of tests out West would be worth a great deal to the hundreds of visitors who annually make the pilgrimage to the Brandon, Indian Head and Agassiz farms. A bulletin is one thing; to be able to see the experiment in progress about which the bulletin is written is a far greater thing.

Another thing which might, we think, be changed, with benefit, is "seed distribution," which is done, to Westerners, on a ridiculously small scale. The farmers who will, or can, afford to bother with a three-pound sample are few, in this country of rapid growth and short seasons. Not only so, but the work entailed on the farms by such microscopic distributions is far too expensive from either standpoint of initial outlay to the taxpayer, or results. If it is desirable to distribute such seeds, why not do away with the free system, and send out the seed in larger quantities, at least enough to seed an acre? It would be better if seed sufficient to sow five acres were furnished, and a fee charged, which might be refunded on the reporting of the results of the tests; or, the larger lots of seed might be distributed free to the agricultural societies, who would be responsible, and see that such were not wasted.

While on the topic of larger experiments, we might casually refer to the milling and baking tests to be instituted by the Directors as a result of the appeal from the Executive of the Manitoba Grain-growers to the Minister of Agriculture. We note from the letter sent out by the Director that such tests will be undertaken good—and that