

Cattle, Sheep and Swine in 1906

(CONTRIBUTED BY ONE WHO KNOWS.)

The year just closed must be accepted as fairly satisfactory for the Canadian stockman. All classes have been in good demand, and in all cases, at extreme prices. The prices for beef cattle have ruled fairly steady throughout the year, although the amount received is too low to afford any reasonable stimulus toward the production of a generally superior quality. $3\frac{1}{2}$ to 4c per lb. live weight will not pay the cost of producing first class cattle, and the result is that far too many ill-fed and ill-bred cattle are sent to market, and because the quality is poor—generally very poor—the demand is not in the least stimulated, but is rather turned to other varieties of food. Those who consume the beef in the large cities pay price enough to obtain the highest quality, but they do not get it. The margin between the price paid by the consumer in a city like Toronto, and the price received by the producer on the farm, seems ever widening, and without an apparent reason. It would seem that the

COST OF DISTRIBUTION

in the city is more than is allowed for its production in the country. This appears reasonable and unnecessary. Beef which nets the farmer say $5\frac{1}{2}$ to 6c dead weight, costs the consumer 8 to 12c, and in some cases more. This is an advance of from 25 to 300 per cent., and to the producer it appears out of all proportion. This is one phase of modern farm life which needs investigation and consideration, if need be, in the interests of all classes. We propose returning to this question again. Our desire is to see the farmer receive his full share of the profit in this branch of his business.

The year 1906 has been exceptional in so far as concerns prices for pure-bred animals. The Shorthorn sales in Scotland for young bulls only, set a pace quite plain and sure. More bulls of first quality were required than the offering contained, hence the scramble for the most select. Nearly $\$900$ for calves less than a year old is beyond any real value for the ordinary breeder. It is doubtful if any real good comes to the breeding business by such a high level of prices. A large number of good breeders, but who are not rich men, are debarred from selecting a suitable sire, while those who do purchase are seldom in a position to utilize those really superior in such a manner as brings the greater good to the breed.

During the year a decided public sentiment has set in the world over in favor of a

COMBINATION OF BEEF AND MILK

in the same breed. The Shorthorns are the most likely breed to meet this demand and the breeders cannot too soon set their house in order. If this breed is to meet the needs of the ordinary farmer who follows mixed farming, they must at least be average milkers. Much improvement can be effected by a more rigid and careful selection of the sires used without in the least destroying the production of beef. The outlook presents a real need and the wise breeder will do well to prepare to meet it.

The question is frequently asked: Why are not more sheep produced in Canada? The natural conditions are excellent. The world's record shows a distinct decrease in the total

number of sheep in the world, and are bringing higher prices than for some years past, yet the demand has only been moderate during the last half of 1906. Any real movement in the trade seems to run in the line of the common sorts, rather than those more highly bred. Importers of pure-bred sheep have not met with the ordinary demand for fancy sheep, and it may be some loss has followed.

It may be, perhaps, that the word "imported" has lost its charm for most people for all classes of live stock. This will work no injury, provided the aim is kept clear in the mind of the breeder as to the production of a superior quality. It may be that as good sires are to be found among our Canadian-bred animals as those brought across the sea. If so, by all means use them. A passage over the sea never yet transformed any species of animal creation. The same animal born in Canada will prove as prepotent for good as he would if dropped in England. But the danger always is present that anything carrying a pedigree will answer. It is not

MERE PEDIGREE-MAKING

which should demand the energy of the breeder, but the production of the best animal suited to the purpose required. No particular breed of sheep in Canada carries this pre-eminence. A very considerable number of long-wooled varieties are still produced, although the wool itself may not be in brisk demand. The lambs of most of these make admirable food when they are utilized before reaching too great an age. Afterwards the tendency is towards an over-production of tallow. Among the short-wools the Shropshire has obtained a strong footing all over Canada. They carry a medium quality of wool, with fairly average weight, while the flesh is generally strongly developed. They are admirably adapted to the Canadian climate and thrive well in any part, from sea to sea.

Many farmers claim the sheep industry cannot be carried on successfully on account of the danger from

WORKING BY DOGS

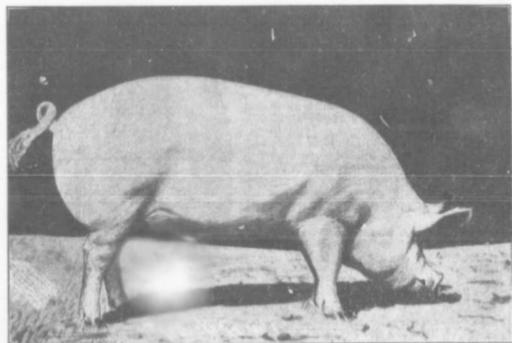
the vast majority of dogs have no specific duty to perform. They are

not needed, but are merely ornamental. It is not wonderful, therefore, if, as in the case of man, Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do. The writer believes that if farmers themselves kept fewer dogs, sheep breeding would be a safer business. Unless dogs are confined in the night, they are likely to wander in the direction of other dogs. If sheep are there also, the temptation for a frolic frequently becomes irresistible and damage follows. The taste of blood is sufficient to destroy the good manners of the best dog in the land. After all, dogs are seldom useful. Some are, because kept always under control and with work to do daily, but the majority are really useless, and the less their number the better for the sheep and the better for the country generally.

1906 has witnessed a good year's business in

SWINE RAISING

A high grade of prices has been maintained throughout most of the months of the year. If any guarantee could be given that these prices would be maintained in future, the number produced would undoubtedly be increased. Our farmers have never yet reached the maximum in this respect. A limited number of hogs can be kept on every farm at a slight cost. Much of the grain and other material unit for marketing can best be utilized in this way, but when this number is largely increased the expense per head is almost certain to bear a higher percentage of cost. The average price for all the months of 1906 would warrant a larger outlay in the cost of production, but our advice is against any considerable increase that would bring the price below the cost of production. Better pay more attention to the quality. Let every farmer remember that nothing can make up in the years to come for a lack of quality. We are competing against the world, and we make bold to say that we have in old Ontario the best breed of bacon hogs in the world. They have sprung from English breeds, but they are to-day better than the original. The proof of the pudding is in the eating, so the test of what is best is in the killing. The Winter Fair killing tests have become the best educator which can possibly be furnished. Without it the breeder could not know what strain or line to follow, but with it we have found the ideal. Let us at any



A Good Type of the Bacon Hog.