

in the field. A good deal of care should be taken in getting sheep or lambs on rape, for there is great danger of their bloating, especially in wet weather or during heavy dews in the mornings. There is a great difference in the seed; there is one kind that is nothing but Bird rape, that goes to seed in a short time and makes very little feed. The Dwarf Essex I believe to be the best when it can be obtained. I buy mine in Canada. It is cheap as only about four pounds are required to the acre when sown broadcast and about two pounds sown in drills, which I believe is the proper way to sow it.

Batavia, N. Y. (1)

JOHN E. YOUNG.

#### NOT LATER THAN AUGUST 1.

1 It has proved very profitable thus far, especially during seasons of drought, furnishing a late very nutritious fall pasture for lambs after they have been weaned and for ewes that are thin in flesh. 2. It is best grown the second crop from a clover sod, and can well follow the next year either corn, oats, peas or barley. To insure a good crop it should germinate quickly after being sown; the soil should therefore be made both rich and fine by thorough tillage, and about six pounds to the acre of seed be broadcasted and harrowed once after it has been sown. The sowing in drills and cultivating afterward I consider wholly unnecessary and a waste of time. One year with another, I think that about August 1 is as late as it can be sown with any degree of certainty of producing a crop; and May 20 is about as early as it can be sown here in western New-York. 3. Yes; but it is better to allow the flock to have access to grass pasture also. The better way at first is to turn the flock on the rape when they are not hungry, as from their love for it too much may be eaten and bloating follow. Turn them on when it is about one foot high, and at first only an hour each day for two or three days, when they can be safely allowed to eat all they want of it; but as sheep love variety of food and do far better when it is furnished, they should not be compelled to subsist wholly on it. 4. I have never fed it in that way; but I consider it practicable to do so, and that it is fully equal to any other green food for that purpose. 5. Only in a small way to cows. They relish it, but I hardly think it practical to feed it to milk cows. Like the turnip, I think the milk would taste of the rape. 6. Yes; but be sure to sow the Dwarf Essex seed, and not the German or Bird rape, as it is nearly worthless for feed and difficult to get out of the soil, as it will soon ripen and the seed will remain in the soil. The Essex will not seed in this country. As far as my experience goes, there is no other green food that will grow and fatten lambs as fast as rape. Any soil that will grow corn and flat turnips will produce it. The richer it is the larger the growth of the rape.

(R.-N. Yorker.) C. D. SMEAD

#### HARDINESS OF DORSET SHEEP.

##### LOTS OF GOOD QUALITIES.

In THE RURAL NEW-YORKER of July 1, page 455, I notice an inquiry from "Subscriber," Gasville, Ohio, as to the best breed of sheep to use for crossing upon common ewes for early

(1) We do not agree with this.—Ed.

maturing lambs, to which the reply was made that the Shropshire would be better than the Dorset Horn, unless he had warm and comfortable barns.

Now I have bred nearly all the English breeds upon common ewes, and have followed this for a good many years, and for early-maturing lambs (that is, winter lambs, as I understand the term) there is no comparison between the Dorset Horn and Shropshire. The Dorset ram will get 50 per cent more very early lambs than the Shropshire, and with 100 ewes will get from 10 to 20 per cent more lambs any way. And further, the cross-bred Dorset lamb will come much stronger, thrive faster and "get there" quicker by far than the Shropshire cross.

The Dorset is a native of the extreme south of England, and does not seem to be affected by our hot summer weather, as are all other English breeds. I have seen the thermometer 90 degrees or more, and all the black-faced rams lay panting in the shade, while the Dorset rams were as active as though it was October. As I have said before—I think in THE R. N.-Y.—we put, in 1890, with each flock of 126 common ewes a Dorset, Shropshire and Hampshire ram, all of about the same age and vigor, and all thoroughbred. They were put with the ewes the last of May, and the flocks were turned into good pasture, but where they could have no care save a weekly salting; out of the first 62 lambs dropped only three had black faces, and of the whole get much more than half—nearly three-fourths—were of the Dorset cross, and considerably more than three-fourths of the twins showed Dorset blood. As to hardiness, the Dorset is not in any particular behind the Shropshire. In England the Dorsets run in very much larger flocks than the Shropshires, and are never housed or penned, while the Shropshires get more than three times the attention.

I do not wish to advocate the keeping of sheep without care. I would advise every one intending to raise early lambs to provide "warm and comfortable barns for the lambs," or keep out of the business. No lamb ever did its best or got to a \$12 or \$16 market, fattened in the shade of a wire fence in our Northern winter. No, no! Provide good quarters, or leave the business to those who will do so.

If "Subscriber" wishes lambs for fattening when coming a year old, then I would advise neither the Dorset nor Shropshire cross, but by all means the Hampshire as a sire. If he will carefully study the reports of fat stock shows or the English market reports, he will see that cross-breeds with Hampshire blood always "get there" at a year old or less. Of course, the Hampshires are larger sheep than either the Dorsets or Shropshires, and are great for early maturity. This may be the result of the way in which the Hampshires have long been bred. Unlike any other breed, more than 99 per cent of all the rams used on the flocks of this breed in England are lambs. It is hard to find a ram one year old or over unless kept for the show ring. When in England, I saw many men in both Hants and Wilts Counties who made ram raising a specialty. In each of several flocks I saw more than half a thousand ram lambs which were receiving extra care to fit them for the annual ram sale to be held in August or September, and before March following nearly all would have been used in the flocks and sent to the shambles for mutton.

One of the very desirable things in a flock of cross-bred lambs for winter feeding is their uniformity, both in size and appearance. In this respect those of the Hampshire cross will far excel the Shropshires. They will be uniformly larger and more symmetrical, and their legs and faces will be much blacker and more evenly colored. Another great point in the Hampshires' favor is the fact of their having heads very different in shape from those of the Shropshire descent, while their heads are long and graced with big Roman noses that are not nearly so thick between the eyes, and consequently do not so endanger the ewes in lambing as do the Shropshires, whose heads are a medium between those of their parents, the Hampshire and South Down (1) With good March-dropped cross-bred Hampshire-Morino lambs, well cared for and fed, there is no trouble in putting them into market the year following, when a year old, at an average of 120 pounds with the wool off and they may be made to do much better.

J. S. WOODWARD

#### SHEEP HUSBANDRY.

[Read before the last meeting of the Dominion Sheep Breeder's Association, by Henry Arkell, Teeswater, Ont.]

The principles upon which the breeding and general management of sheep should be conducted are subject to such modifications as are necessary to the peculiarities of soil and climate, and other surroundings. In the long run the best results are obtained by breeding sheep really good of their kind, whatever that kind may be.

I purpose to touch upon what I conceive to be some of the weak points in the management of sheep in this country, both by the ordinary farmer, and also the breeder of pure-bred stock. By the ordinary farmer, sheep are treated a good deal like what is termed in husbandry a "catch crop"; instead of being provided for under a regular system of management, no particular provision is made to insure their producing the largest amount of wool and mutton within a given time, which would make them render to their owner the largest amount of profit, and also show the excellency of the breed or flock, and the owner's skill in the management of same.

If the farmer would give even as much attention to his sheep as he does to the ordinary rotation of his field crops, and as carefully select his sires as he does his seed grain, I am safe in saying he would be able to keep four times as many sheep on his farm as he does now, with a corresponding profit, without diminishing the amount of other stock on the farm. For instance, when summer comes, instead of turning his sheep on the highways, as many do, or into the pasture fields and have his wife complaining that "those sheep are eating all the grass from the cows," I would suggest that he sow the land intended for turnips with fall rye, and by the middle of May he will have the very best feed ever found for ewes and lambs; and after his rye is finished, which should be before it comes out in head, or in time to put in his turnips, a patch of oats and tares should be ready, which may be sown on the summerfallow, if he does summerfallow—if not, on land set apart for the purpose—followed again by tares sown at intervals of two

(1) With a cross of the native sheep.—Ed.

weeks apart till his clover is fit for feeding to the lambs, which should be weaned by the first of August, when the ewes can run the stubble field. After the clover, rape should be provided for the lambs, which should be finished by the middle of November, and the lambs be fed with white turnips or swedes, as the case may be, with a little grain.

In feeding the above-mentioned crops I have no doubt the question will be asked. How will you do it? Answer.—Use a portable fence, a portion of which is so constructed as to allow the lambs to have access to the portion of the field where the ewes are to be fed on the morrow, where they can be fed a little grain if desirable; this, of course, is optional.

Give your sheep each day what they will eat after the rye is finished, and as the weather gets hot provide a field where they can run, having access to water and shade through the heat of the day, say from ten o'clock in the morning till four o'clock in the afternoon, when they return to their allowance of tares, oats, etc. By this means your land is regularly manured instead of the fence corners or the highways, and your sheep will be healthier and grow more wool of a better quality, and your lambs will take well to their winter food on coming into the yard, if you keep them for fattening. A very small quantity of land will, under this system, keep twenty or thirty ewes and lambs through the summer and not interfere with your other stock, besides leaving on the land the manure, worth at least ten cents per week per ewe and lamb. The food consumed will by this plan be grown on land that otherwise would have lain idle for a great portion of the summer.

If farmers will only take pains to save well their pea straw, this, with a few turnips, will winter ewes well until lambing season approaches, when good clover hay will be required. Much has been said about giving water to sheep in winter. My experience of thirty years in Canada is that sheep do not require water when fed a sufficient quantity of turnips, viz., from seven to eight pounds daily in two feeds for a ewe in lamb. Feed young sheep nearly all they will eat, with salt always before them. Keep them in a suitable building provided with a yard to feed in, divided off according to age and size. Place them where they cannot be molested by other stock.

As intimated in the beginning of this paper, I wish to notice what to me seems the weak points in the breeding and management of our established breeds of sheep.

The first which presents itself to my mind is the want of uniformity in the flock; this is great weakness and drawback to our success as breeders, and the question arises, why does this exist? First, I think from want of more careful and judicious selection of sires, for, as one of your members has stated in a former paper, "the sire is half the flock." I have said careful and judicious selection of sires, for it is a pretty well-known fact that as a general rule the first cross between an inferior and superior animal is very successful, producing, in many instances, animals equal to the improved breeds used; but the judgment and skill of the breeder is called forth in raising the standard of his pure-bred flock. This has been done, and what has been done can be repeated, but it requires great care and shrewd judgment to bring about the desired results. One reason why failure in this direction is often experienced is, I