Swine in Ireland, England and Scotland

The report of the Dominion Swine Commission just published and mentioned elsewhere in this issue shows that in Ireland the rank and file of pig raisers are men of small means who have found in the pig a means of converting unsaleable products from the dairy, the potato field and other parts of the farm into a valuable product. Long experience, coupled with frugal habits and need of the returns from the fatted swine, have taught the most profitable methods of feeding. This cannot be said to be done by any special system, but rather according to the circumstances of each case and the judgment of the feeder begotten through long experience. The average Irish pig feeder is quick to detect evidence of unthriftiness in his pigs, and sharp to apply the remedy. He does not overstock, but keeps sufficient to use to best advantage the offals and by-products he has, together with as little as possible of expensive food. He keeps on day after day and year after year in raising swine, and this is perhaps the most important lesson he has for the Canadian farmer. By this persistence he has done his part in bringing the Irish bacon trade into a profitable industry for Ireland and the individual Irish farmer

In England the conditions are different. All agriculture may be said to be carried on by an intensive system. While as in Ireland no suitable by-products are allowed to waste for want of pigs, the industry goes farther than this, amounting even to an important branch of a highly organized system of live stock husbandry. The rearing of pigs is carried on as a business enterprise and no chance is taken in regard to the losing of money. Much of the concentrated food used is purchased at high prices, and the books in the pig account must show a profit. There is little chance to save in the price of food, which leaves the profit to be made from the pig side. The employment of a bright, experienced feeder kept under the watchful eye of the master, is the means adopted in getting results from the foods consumed. The English farmer, too, is stable and consistent in his system of farming, and this has given him experience and established a reputation for his products. He has a valuable lesson for the Canadian in his consistency of purpose, application and keen business principles.

The Scots farmer does not make a specialty of pork production. He milks cows and makes cheese and uses pigs to turn the whey to good account. He buys most of his grain food and must exercise care to get back his money with a little profit and something for the whey. He has studied how to get these, and follows intelligently what he has found to give best results. Having learned that sweet whey is better feed than sour, he gives it as fresh as possible and avoids, as a principle, feeding a larger quantity than experience has taught to be economical. The feeding is done with every care and regularity, usually by the same person. The Scots feeder would teach the Canadian cheese factory patron that there is profit in the intelligent feeding of whey in sweet condition to pigs from store to finished weight.

Weeds Commonly Found in Ontario

J. Lockie Wilson, Supt. of Fairs.

The alarming rate at which the perennial sow thistle is spreading over the Province calls for strenuous work on the part of farmers in combatting this subtle weed foe. Almost unknown a very few years ago, it is now found in more or less large patches in many sections of Ontario, both east and west, and unless steps are taken at once to check it, in a very short time it will be found everywhere.

The best plan of destroying it is by smothering. Pasture the land closely with cattle and sheep till about the middle or end of June, according to the season; then plow down, cultivate well and sow the plot with rape, buckwheat or millet. Rape in drills is especially good, as its rapid growth smothers the thistle faster than any other crop, and this process is helped by frequent cultivation. If the thistle is not destroyed the first season, repeat the smothering process the following year. Success has also been obtained by allowing the thistles to commence blooming, when the weed is devoting all its strength to producing seed; then plow carefully, making certain that all the thistle growth is turned down, cultivate thoroughly, manure the land and sow to one of the three crops mentioned above.

Stringent means should be promptly adopted by Municipal Councils to prevent the spread of this most noxious weed. A group of farmers in a locality may take every precaution in an endeavor to keep their farms free from this troublesome pest, but their efforts will be in vain if one farmer in the district allows this perennial sow thistle to go to seed, for every wind that blows scatters its seed over the land for miles.

Besides the perennial sow thistle, the judges in the Standing Field Crop Competitions found the following weeds: Ragweed, wild oats, mustard, couch grass, dock, Canada thistle, annual sow thistle, wild buckwheat, lamb's quarters, bladder campion, wild chicory, cockle, catchfly, bindweed, foxtail, camomile, wild tares, ox-eye daisy, pigweed, golden rod, mullein, yarrow, shepherd's purse, false flax, wild carrot, blue vervain, and numerous smaller and less noxious weeds.

The Value of Ensilage

Prof. A. L. Haecker, Nebraska Experiment Station.

One ton of ensilage equals one ton sugar beets.

Three tons of silage equal one ton clover hay.

Three and one-half tons of silage equal one ton alfalfa hay.

Two and one-fourth tons of silage equal one ton marsh hay.

Three and one-half tons of silage equal one ton prairie hay.

One-half ton of silage equals one ton pumpkins.

The comparative cost of putting up corn silage and hay follows: One ton of silage cost to put up, 63 cents; one ton of hay cost to put up, $1.50; one ton of silage occupies 50 cubic feet; one ton of hay occupies 500 cubic feet.

It will be seen that 10 times more space is required for hay than silage, and I do not believe it possible to construct even a cheap hay shed, to say nothing of a barn, for the price required to store the same quantity of silage. With the ordinary hay loft in a good dairy barn, the cost of storage space would be three times that of the silo. The table also gives a comparison between the cost of harvesting corn ensilage as compared with hay. It will be seen that corn silage can be put up for almost one-third the cost of hay. These figures do not allow for interest on money invested in machinery or storage. While hay is about three times richer in food elements, it is still an expensive roughage as compared with ensilage.

Until the feeder can find a food equal to corn silage for even twice the cost, he had better seriously consider the silo. An acre of corn put in the silo I value at $55, while the same corn standing in the field and husked in the usual manner I value at $27. This is accounting for all cost of harvesting. Then an acre in the silo is worth two in the field, or, putting it another way, the silo doubles the value of the corn crop.