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Representative for Great Britain and Ireland, W W CHAPMAN, Fitzalan House, Arundel St., Strand, LONDON, ENG.

TOPICS FOR THE WEEK.

Agricultural News and Comments.

According to an eminent English veterinarian, pregnant mares are liable to variations of appetite, to nausea, and indifference of food; and at other times to a morbid insatiable hunger. If this fact were distinctly recognized by horse breeders and measures for relief adopted, the mare's usefulness and also the well-being of the produce would be materially advanced.

At a recent sale of hackney and harness horses held in England, out of seventy five horses, fifty-seven changed hands and several were afterwards sold in private sale. A chestnut cob, 14 hands 2 inches high, brought 62 guineas and a chestnut gelding, 15 hands 3 inches high, brought 60 guineas. There was a large attendance of buyers, and trade for harness horses and cobs was exceedingly brisk.

Recently in the British House of Commons the President of the Board of Agriculture was asked whether for the last six years there had been a case of infectious or contagious cattle disease in the Dominion of Canada and if not, whether he would now consent to remove the restriction upon the importation of store cattle from that country into Great Britain. In his reply Mr. Long stated that he could not take upon himself the responsibility of saying whether the facts were as stated in the first part of the question. With regard to the second part the law left no option but to secure that all animals brought to Great Britain are slaughtered at the port of landing.

The dates of the exhibits of live stock at the Omaha Exposition are as follows: Cattle, horses, sheep and swine, from October 3rd to October 20th, inclusive; fat stock, October 13th to October 20th, inclusive; and poultry, September 19th to September 30th, inclusive. Any of our breeders who contemplate visiting the show should arrange to be there during these dates.

The kind of farming in vogue some years ago, when our fathers scratched the ground among the green stumps with a primitive plow and, sowing the seed, waited in perfect confidence for a harvest of forty or fifty bushels to the acre, is no longer possible now. Systematic farming must be practised

and a line of policy followed that will tend to maintain and increase the fertility in the soil.

The following from an exchange is interesting, if not funny: "The girl, who expressed so much sympathy for the poor farmer because of his cold job in harvesting his winter wheat, is equal in agricultural knowledge to the one who expressed a desire to see a field of tobacco when it is just plugging out. But the damsel who asked which cow gave the buttermilk is entitled to the whole bakery. And a girl on her return from a visit to the country was asked if she ever saw anyone milk a cow, replied, 'Oh, yes, indeed I have. It tickles me to death to see uncle jerk two of the cow's faucets at the same time.'"

Bread is worth two and one half times as much as potatoes, weight for weight, but this does not argue that we should confine ourselves to a diet of bread. Fruit, considered as a food, is not of much more value than flavored water, yet it is one of the best of foods. Fruit is of special value in the treatment of intestinal inactivity, or constipation. It is most effective for this purpose when taken by itself before or after meals.

During 1892 there were 500,000 more cattle marketed at the four principal points in the west—Chicago, St. Louis, Kansas City, and Omaha—than in 1897. High water mark was reached in 1892, when the receipts at these points were 6,442,397. There will probably be a small increase this year over last because of the large buying in Canada, Mexico, and elsewhere. About 9,000,000 less cattle were returned by the government estimates on January 1st than the year before, and it would, therefore, seem that good prices will maintain for the cattle now maturing in the country.

Meadow foxtail is considered by the British farmer to be one of the very best grasses for laying down permanent pastures. It is vigorous, and grows readily under almost any conditions. Of the stronger grasses it is decidedly the best, and, though hardy, it never becomes coarse. Its succulent and nutritious qualities are particularly great, and in its green state bullocks and lambs thrive well upon it. It makes the best hay of its kind, and, both in flower and foliage, it flourishes earliest, and, when the pastures are destitute of other herbage in the early spring, it luxuriates.

According to some interesting experiments conducted by a British army veterinary surgeon horses exerting themselves to the greatest possible extent will perform a dead pull of from 65 to 78.5 per cent. of the weight of their bodies. The greater the weight of the horse the higher percentage he is able to pull. In these experiments horses averaging 1,526 lbs. pulled 78.5 per cent. of their weight, and those averaging 1,225 lbs. pulled 65 per cent.

So effective has been the method of shallow cultivation followed at the Ontario Experimental Farm at Guelph that the crops grown this year are greater than ever. The yield per acre has increased so rapidly that Mr. Rennie, the Farm Superintendent, writes: "The government will have to build larger barns or we will have to return to the old system of cultivation." The system of shallow cultivation now in vogue has been carried on by Mr. Rennie during the past three or four years with the above result.

The Quebec Abattoir Scheme.

Abattoirs are being talked of for Levis, Quebec. The capacity of these slaughter houses would be 1,000 tons per week. This would imply the supplying of 50,000 steers or cows, 200,000 calves, 200,000 sheep, 200,000 hogs, etc. Promoters of the scheme estimate that the 52,000 tons of material requisite to keep such works in operation during a whole year could be procured in Quebec, but this is doubtful. There are estimated to be 700,000 milch cows, 400,000 draft oxen, heifers, etc., and 500,000 hogs at present in Quebec. There are killed each year at birth 400,000 calves, and probably only 100,000 are raised each year. It is claimed that if abattoirs are established all these calves could be raised and slaughtered for beef for the British markets.

The one serious mistake that will be made if the scheme, as above outlined, and its objects, as therein indicated, are carried out is that of attempting to send dressed beef to Great Britain that is not of the very best quality. To endeavor to raise these 400,000 calves that would otherwise be "deaconed" every year and make a first class quality of beef out of them is simply absurd. The very reason that this large number of calves has been treated in this way is sufficient to show that it will be practically impossible to make anything but "scrub" beef out of them, even though they are fed and cared for in the very best way.

Why is the practice of "deaconing," or killing the calves, followed, anyhow? Is it not because the milk that would be required to raise the calves is wanted for the cheese factory or creamery? If so, then these 400,000 calves "deaconed" every year in the Province of Quebec are the offspring of cows bred and kept for dairy purposes only, and not for the production of beef. How absurd, then, is it for the promoters of this gigantic abattoir scheme to talk of saving these calves and raising them for the export trade in dressed beef?

Every shipper and exporter of live cattle to Great Britain or of dressed beef knows that each shipment must be of the very best quality in order to meet the needs of the export trade. This high quality required cannot be produced from cattle bred and fed for dairy purposes, as the cows of Quebec have been during the past twenty five years. If Canadians hope to develop the export trade in live cattle or in dressed beef only the highest types of beef animals should be used for this purpose. As we pointed out in last week's issue, a dairy cow and a dairy bull may produce a "scrub" steer, but it requires a cow and a bull of the best beef types to produce a steer fit for the export trade.

We believe, however, that an abattoir scheme is along the right line, but let it be started right. If the one proposed for Quebec is for the purpose of saving the 400,000 calves which are "deaconed" every year in that province, then the scheme will only prove a disaster so far as the development of our export beef trade is concerned. There is plenty of room in this broad dominion for both the dairy industry and the beef cattle trade, but each must be conducted along different lines. Other countries which cater to the dressed beef trade of Great Britain, such as Argentina and the United States, aim to send forward the very best quality of beef at all times, and we must do the same if we are to come in for a fair share of that trade. Not only must the breeding be right but the feeding also. We question very much if the