

Mr. Millar has rendered faithful and able services to Ontario dairying in his work as instructor, and we voice the sentiments of Western Ontario dairymen generally when we wish him success in his new venture.

CORRESPONDENCE

A Criticism of Mr. Fearman's Letter in Our Exhibition Number

To the Editor of FARMING:

In your exhibition number of Farming, dated Sept. 6th, you publish a letter over the signature of E. C. Fearman, of Hamilton, regarding the feeding and breeding of hogs suitable to supply the bacon trade of Canada. I have been waiting for some of the parties who were more directly concerned in the affair to reply to Mr. Fearman, but, as neither answer nor criticism seems forthcoming, I take it upon myself to criticize his letter, particularly in the matter of feeding and breeding hogs. I have had an experience extending over a number of years in hog raising and feeding, but never fed, nor heard tell of anyone in this district feeding hogs after Mr. F.'s plan, viz. . . To allow hogs to range at will during finishing period. This kind of management would simply spell ruin to farmers foolish enough to be led astray by such talk. I think I would be safe in saying that I have the approval of ninety per cent. of the practical feeders of the country when I say that, no matter what the breed, hogs cannot be fed at a profit if allowed to range.

Mr. Fearman in no uncertain voice advises the farmers what to feed. From a packer's standpoint Mr. F.'s sayings may be wise; from a feeder's standpoint they are unwise. Mr. F. must know that farmers have to feed the kind of grain that their land will produce most abundantly. With us corn is the principal coarse grain, barley and oats are poor yielders, and peas have been abandoned altogether. Must we then buy nice stuff for our hogs, or go out of the business? Essex and Kent, the two corn counties of Ontario, produce annually hundreds of thousands of pounds of pork, large quantities of which finds its way to the Britisher as A-1 Wiltshire. The farmer who feeds his hogs on the plan outlined by Mr. F. will find his profits considerably smaller at the end of the year than if he had taken the more sensible plan of penning his hogs up during finishing period.

I am not personally acquainted with Mr. F., but think that his adverse criticisms of certain breeds, and his endeavor to "boom" certain other breeds, to say the least, was very indiscreet. The positions occupied by the Duroc-Jersey and Poland-Chinas, at the test conducted by the O. A. C. staff in 1896 (see page 72, O. A. C. Report, 1896), places these two valuable breeds in an enviable station. Mr. F.'s condemnation of the Duroc-Jersey reminds me of an amusing incident which occurred in this vicinity a short time ago. A neighbor, Mr. A., sold ten head of hogs to a shipper here, the lot weighing twenty hundred and twenty, or an average of over two hundred pounds, at not quite six months old. The shipper of these hogs drew the attention of different farmers to this lot of hogs, and said that they were one of the best lots that he had bought this year, telling the farmers that they were Tam and Chester White cross. In reality they were bred from a Duroc-Jersey hog and a grade Berk sow and had not one drop of Tam or Chester blood in them, all of which goes to prove that a lot of prejudice against certain breeds has no substantial foundation. It is not the wish of the writer to detract from the merits of any breed, all breeds have their merits and demerits; but in the humble opinion of your scribe, if the Britisher had to wait for his dinner until it was furnished off Mr. Fearman's lean rangers, the jolly, rotund figure that generally represents John Bull would have to be replaced by a more meagre specimen.

Respectfully yours,

J. L. WRIGHT.

Clachan, Kent Co.,
Nov. 28th, 1898.

The Chronic Deterioration of Fertility

To the Editor of FARMING:

It has afforded me much pleasure and information to peruse the many intelligent articles with which your valuable journal abounds. The remarks made from time to time re phosphatic manuring have been excellent, and are calculated to do much good, as the enormous importance the phosphates exercise in our agricultural and general economy has only become to be duly appreciated since, during these latter years, we have found much of our land becoming unproductive and unprofitable. Experience, observation, investigation, and experiment have now taught us that this chronic deterioration of fertility is in a great measure owing to the soil having, under the influence of cropping or grazing, become depleted of its phosphatic principle. Of course, it is well known that phosphate is the foundation of bone, and that to this end it must first be incorporated into the vegetable kingdom. In carrying out this grand scheme of co-operation, nature has arranged that phosphate shall form an essential and vital part of every plant, and no plant or crop can reach maturity if there is not a sufficient supply of phosphatic plant food available in the soil.

The same rule follows through the animal kingdom. If the phosphatic element is not in sufficient abundance in the food the animal cannot thrive. This natural law applies equally to the human family and to the lower animals. For but too ample evidence of this amidst frail humanity we have but to glance at the decrepit, rickety, weak-kneed millions to be any day seen in the slop-fed slums of our magnificent cities.

But my purpose just now is not to philosophize, but to assist in calling attention to the urgent necessity for maintaining the land in good phosphatic heart, as at the present low price of reliable phosphatic fertilizers this may be accomplished under all circumstances profitably; and there is no excuse for those benighted agriculturists who meander through a useless existence with half crops and half-starved cattle.

It is these half measures wherein the danger lies, for, as Tennyson says:

"A lie which is a lie may be
Dealt and fought with outright,
But a lie which is half a truth
Is a harder matter to fight."

If land is entirely exhausted of its phosphates, it has, of necessity, to be either renovated or abandoned, as it has become practically barren and sterile. But there is not a large proportion of land totally denuded of phosphate, yet there is an immense area throughout the world that has become partially so; in fact the great majority of cultivated lands, both arable and pasture, are now phosphatically below the standard of maximum productive fertility. Under such conditions live stock will not thrive satisfactorily, neither can crops be grown remuneratively; yet, admittedly, millions do continue under such depressing influences to eke out a sort of hand-to-mouth existence, bewailing the fatality which has destined them to a life of drudgery on such "poor land." And yet in thousands upon thousands of these cases it needs but an inexpensive dressing of phosphatic manure, such as "Thomas-Phosphate Powder," or superphosphate, to place them on a sound progressive basis. Superphosphate, as is well known, is a quick acting phosphate, suitable for immediate crop-forcing purposes, while the more stable "Thomas-Phosphate Powder" is peculiarly well adapted for the top dressing of clovers and pastures, and the restoration of permanent fertility to exhausted soils.

A very interesting case of land recuperation is now being discussed in that well-known English journal, *The Field*. A Welsh gentleman, Mr. Morgan Richardson, a few years ago entered on some land that was then considered well-nigh valueless. By repeated inexpensive dressings of phos-