

CANADA'S SHEEP INDUSTRY

(By E. S. BATES in "The Journal of Commerce")

CHAPTER V.

The Canadian Breeds of Sheep

The leading breeds of sheep to be found throughout the world, with the exception of the Merino, have been developed in the British Isles, where there are to be found in a state of greater or less purity more than a score of breeds. These breeds have been introduced into all the sheep raising countries where mixed grades of the original British stock have been found adaptable. The chief of these breeds are the Black Faces, Hardwick, Gray, Lonk, Devon, Long-wool, Exmoor, Welsh, Cheviot, Suffolk, Leicester, Lincoln, Cotswold, Oxford, Shropshire, Hampshire, South-down and Dorset. The principal Canadian breeds include the last eight named, the Merino and a small number of Black Faces, Suffolks and Cheviots. The Lincoln, the Leicester and the Cotswold are known as the long-wooled sorts, while the Oxford, the Shropshire, the Dorset, the Hampshire and the Southdown are classed as medium-wooled, the fleece shortening in the order named. The Suffolk and the Cheviot are also classed as medium-wooled, and the Merino grade as fine woolled. The Merino in Canada is confined altogether to the Western Provinces, where the blood is mixed with the British types and a grade established similar to that found in the Western States. The other breeds have been introduced into all the Provinces and are to be found in a more or less pure state.

The Leicester

The Leicester is the oldest of the long-wooled races of sheep. It is believed to have been developed by Robert Blakewell of Dishley, England, about 1765, and from that strain the English Leicester and the Border Leicester were originated, the difference between the two being seen in the head. The head of the latter is clean, free from wool, while that of the former carries a tuft of wool. Canadian Leicesters are among the best of the Leicester family, and many good flocks have been built up by the careful weeding and selection Canadians have carried out. It is said that no other race of sheep have been so largely employed as a means of improving other breeds as the Leicester. It is one of the large breeds, the average weight for mature rams in good condition being 250 to 300 pounds, and for ewes, 175 to 250 pounds. The head is small for the size of the body, and it is carried with pronounced erectness. The nose is slightly Roman in rams, but almost straight in ewes. The ear is thin, moderately long and carried decidedly erect and alert. The head and legs are snow white in young animals, but become darker with age. The fleece is of somewhat less length than that of the Cotswold or the Lincoln. The wool is glossy and of good fibre and should cover the entire carcass, save the head and legs. It hangs in dense spirals which carry their crimp or wave to the skin. The fleece should consist of a mass of distinct curls all over the body and without "parting" at the back, as in some other long-wooled breeds.

The Cotswold

The Cotswold sheep is native to the countries of Gloucestershire and Worcestershire, England. It is a big upstanding sheep, somewhat larger and stronger of bone than the Leicester. A distinguishing characteristic of this breed is the topknot or forelock, which is seldom shorn close to the head but allowed to hang over the face, extending in some cases to the point of the nose. They are quite hardy, and do well on moderate elevations that are not too rugged. The average weight of a mature Cotswold ram in good condition is about 250 to 300 pounds, and of a ewe, 190 to 225 pounds. The fattening qualities of the breed are good, although the flesh is only moderately fine in grain if allowed to reach more than maturity. The fleece is heavy, wavy, and rather coarser than that of the Leicester, and should cover the body in all parts. The head is carried erect, the neck longer than that of the Leicester and rather slim. Breeders have bred for a bold and open curl in the fleece rather than the close spiral of the Leicester. The Cotswold is looked upon as a white faced breed.

The Lincoln

The Lincoln breed originated from the low alluvial lands of Lincolnshire, England, where through consistent inter-breeding and crossing, the excellent type of the present day was obtained. It was first recognized as a pure breed in 1862. It is an excellent breed of wool and mutton sheep, and is much in demand for breeding purposes. It is a white-faced type, and has a conspicuous tuft on the forehead. The head is massive but not coarse; the nose being somewhat arched and bare of wool. Mature rams in good condition

reach average weights of 250 to 325 pounds, and ewes from 220 to 250 pounds. The wool is unexcelled for weight of fleece and length of fibre, and its fineness is about equal to that of the Cotswold. It is highly valued for the manufacture of coarse worsted and other materials which call for long fibre and great strength. The usual clip runs from 10 to 14 pounds for ewes, and 12 to 18 pounds for rams, of unwashed wool. A year's growth of wool is about 8 inches. The Lincoln is more massive than either the Leicester or Cotswold, but more nearly resembles the latter in outline and has a shorter, thicker neck than either of these breeds. The flesh inclines to coarseness after the animals have reached maturity, but lambs and yearlings dress well and produce meat of good quality.

The Oxford Down

The Oxford Down sheep is a produce of a cross between the Hampshire, Down and the Cotswold, and was originated about 1833. It is one of the largest and heaviest of the Down breeds, approaching very closely to the Hampshire in this regard. The average weight of the Oxford Down ram in good condition is from 250 to 275 pounds, and of the ewe to about 220 pounds at maturity.

It is more adapted than that of the Down in fineness of quality and even admixture of fat and lean. The wool is longer and coarser than that of any of the other Down breeds, and is less dense over the body. The average fleece should weigh from 9 to 12 pounds. The Oxford is in much favor in this country, being numerously kept in almost all the provinces.

The Hampshire Down

The Hampshire Down breed is native to the chalk hills of the South-down counties of England, particularly to Hampshire, Berkshire and Wiltshire, and is one of the oldest types. The breed was established about 1834. The Hampshire is the heaviest of the Down breeds, and is excelled in weight only by the Lincoln and Cotswold among the long-wooled races. Mature rams in good flesh weigh from 250 to 300 pounds and ewes from 170 to 225 pounds. It matures very easily, and is a favorite in getting heavy lambs for the spring trade. The fleece is dense and about equal in fineness to that of the Shropshire; weighing about 8 to 10 pounds of unwashed wool. The color of the head is a uniform black with a small topknot of white wool. The ears are large, free from mottles and fine in texture. The breed is well adapted to either pasture or pen feeding.

The Shropshire

The Shropshire, as a pure breed, received its first recognition in 1853, and is a native of Shropshire, England. As a combined wool and mutton sheep, it holds a prominent place. The body, though longer, is like that of the Southdown, being low set, thick and fleshy, and carrying a large proportion of lean meat, held in high favor by butchers. The fleece is dense and uniform, and approaches that of the Southdown in fineness, weighing from 7 to 12 pounds of unwashed wool. The Shropshire occupies a wide field for crossing and grading purposes, having many qualities that are valuable in this regard. The Shropshire is in high favor in this country, and an excellent breed has been established.

The Southdown

The Southdown is the oldest of the improved, medium-wooled, dark faced breeds of sheep, and is indigenous to the chalk hills of the southern counties of England. It originally was horned, but these appendages have long since disappeared. It is one of the most beautiful sheep existing, its smooth body, round clean barrel, short legs, fine head and broad saddle with its sweet, tender, seldom over-fat meat, make it most attractive. It is the smallest of the medium-wooled breeds, but weighs remarkably well for its size owing to its compact form. A mature ram in good condition will weigh about 200 pounds, ewes from 150 to 200 pounds. The fleece of the Southdown is the finest and shortest of the Down breeds. It is dense, and as a rule, very uniform over the body, and will clip on an average from 5 to 7 pounds unwashed wool. The face, ears and legs of the Southdown are of a uniform shade of grayish brown or mouse colour. The forehead and cheeks are well covered with wool of the same whiteness as found on other parts of the body. The ears are rather small and covered with fine hair and are carried with a lively back and forth movement.

The Suffolk

The Suffolk sheep belongs to the Down breeds native to Suffolk, Norfolk, Cambridge and Essex, England, and was recognized as a pure breed in 1810. The Suffolk resembles the Hampshire, although somewhat less in size and weight, but it is heavier

than the Southdown or the Shropshire. Mature rams in good condition weigh from 240 to 260 pounds, and ewes from 190 to 210 pounds. They are longer than the Shropshire in body and limb. The head is longer, narrower and bare of wool. The head and legs are glossy black. They shear a little more than the Southdown, and the wool is about equal in quality to the Hampshire or the Shropshire.

The Dorset

The Dorset is one of the oldest of the British breeds of sheep. It is a horned type, both sexes having retained horns from the earliest years to the present day. It belongs to the medium-wooled breeds, but, unlike most of the others, possesses white face and legs. It surpasses all other breeds of sheep in breeding qualities, and for that reason is held in great favor as a producer of what are known as hothouse rams. The average weight of mature rams is about 200 pounds, of ewes about 170 pounds. The wool of the Dorset is much like that of the Shropshire in quality. The fleece is quite dense, very white and elastic. The crown and jaws are covered in about the same way as the Southdown. Rams clip about 10 pounds and ewes about from 7 to 8 pounds of unwashed wool. The Dorset was imported to Canada as early as 1835, and is in high favor.

The Cheviot

The Cheviot is one of the oldest of the modern breeds of sheep and is native to the hills bordering Scotland and England. The breed was established about 1792, and has maintained its position in the British Isles since that time. It is one of the hardiest of the medium-wooled types and has been found very adaptable to the more rugged portions of Quebec and the Maritime Provinces. They are of medium size, approaching the Shropshire in weight. Ewes weigh from 150 to 160 pounds, and rams from 180 to 215 pounds. They are white-faced and hornless, rather long in body, and good mutton producers, developing rather a plump carcass of mixed fat and lean, which possesses a fine flavor and tenderness. The fleece has a tendency to openness and is somewhat longer and coarser than the best type of Shropshire staple. Ewes shear from 6 to 9 pounds, and rams from 2 to 12 pounds of unwashed wool. The Cheviot is peculiarly adapted to hilly and rolling sections, and is increasing in favor among sheep breeders in this country.

The Merino

The Merino is a fine-wooled sheep and has been bred since early in the Christian era. It is said to be of Spanish origin, but has been bred in other parts of Europe for so long that many varieties have been developed. As a mutton producer, the pure Merino type ranks low, but as a foundation stock for grading purposes with other breeds it has been much in favor. Merinos are bred in large numbers in Australia, New Zealand and Argentina, chiefly for their wool production, and for many years have formed the foundation stock of the United States flocks, where of late years they have been bred with the English breeds to a very large extent. It has only been as a foundation stock for grading purposes that this breed has reached the Dominion in any considerable numbers, although a few pure bred flocks are still to be found in the West. The Merino, as a breed, is among the lightest of registered sheep, the average weighing from 150 to 200 pounds, and ewes from 90 to 130 pounds, although different grades average much heavier weight than these. The breed is adaptable to a wide range of conditions, and most suitable for raising under the ranching system.

INVISIBLE WAR VESSELS

Owing to the enormous range and accuracy of modern naval guns it is highly important for small war craft which depend upon speed rather than armor plate to weather the attacks of the enemy, to render themselves invisible as possible. Heretofore, says "Scientific American," dark gray paint has been considered the best color to supply to a war vessel. Now experiments are being made with varieties of colors. Ideas are being borrowed from the mimicry of nature. We find certain animals cloaked with spotted fur, and other with stripes, depending upon the nature of their environment, and these colorings make them very difficult to discover in their natural habitat. In exactly the same way our naval authorities are trying to render torpedo boats invisible by painting wavy stripes on them, which at great distances can hardly be distinguished from the natural wave formations of the ocean's surface.

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CO-OPERATIVE MARKETING OF POULTRY

While the activities of the Live Stock Branch of the Dominion Department of Agriculture with regard to the organization of Co-operative Egg and Poultry Marketing Associations have been largely confined to date to the Eastern Provinces of the Dominion, the need and opportunity for work of this kind in the Western Provinces have not been overlooked.

From the fact that co-operative marketing of poultry products was something entirely new, it was thought advisable to thoroughly test out the practicability of the system before extending it to a wider area. Satisfactory results having been obtained in the East, arrangements are now being made to extend the work to the Western Provinces.

The new field to be organized will receive the benefit of the experience of men who have been associated with the co-operative work since its inception. Mr. T. A. Benson, who for the past three years has been in charge of the co-operative organization in Prince Edward Island is being transferred to the Province of Alberta to fill a position similar to that which he has held in Prince Edward Island.

Mr. J. H. Hare, who has had an extensive experience in this work, not only with the Ontario Provincial Department of Agriculture, but also during the last two years with the commercial and marketing end of the work undertaken by the Live Stock Branch, has been given general supervision of the Egg Circle work being conducted by the Branch. Mr. Hare is now in the Western Provinces and will devote the greater part of his time for the next year to directing operations there. For the present he will confine his activities principally to the Province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. R. J. Allen, B. S. A., has been appointed to take immediate charge of the organization of co-operative Egg and Poultry Marketing Associations in Manitoba. Mr. Allen has had an extensive experience not only in Departmental work but also in the commercial field and goes to Manitoba well fitted to carry on this work effectively.

Mr. Wm. Kerr, B. S. A., who was in district representative work in Ontario for some time previous to joining the staff of the Live Stock Branch, and who has been associated with Mr. Benson in Prince Edward Island during the past summer, is now in charge of the work in that Province. Both during his college course and later, during active work in the field Mr. Kerr has made a special study of the theory and practice of the co-operative marketing of farm products. He enters the work in Prince Edward Island, therefore, well equipped to take up the problems that have developed in connection with the advanced nature of the work at that point.

CHRISTMAS NUMBER OF SCRIBNER'S MAGAZINE

You will laugh over Mary Raymond Shipman Andrew's story, "The Very Lilac One," in the Christmas Scribner. "Curly Brown" was a very clever young lady. Katherine Holland Brown's "The First Born" will touch your sympathies deeply. It is a story of a father's tender love of a day of great happiness. "Jeanne the Maid," the story of a Jeanne d'Arc of to-day in France, by Gordon Arthur Smith, shows him to be entitled to consideration as one of our best writers of short stories. Abbie Carter Goodloe's "The Jade" is a charming love story of the forties, and the hero of Charles Belmont Davis's story, "Her Own Sort," is a famous movie actor. A young society girl comes back to her own sort after some experiences on the stage.

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