

Sheep Breeding a Profitable Industry.

BY ALDERMAN FRANKLIN.

Read before the Canadian Sheep Breeders' Association.

Why not followed in Ontario to a greater extent? Grain crops don't pay, and cattle are not as high as they were, yet the Canadian farmer realizes three-quarters of a cent more for his fat cattle per pound than the feeders of the United States.

Sheep are high, and indeed very scarce, but a man may travel all through Ontario for a year and he will never see from out of a railway window 100 sheep in a flock; if he does they are the collection of some drover who has collected them together in twos and threes awaiting shipment to some market. Of late years, owing to the higher price of Down wools, the use of rams of the larger Down breeds upon the Leicesters and Cotswold cross that constitutes the common sheep of the country, has been prevalent, and we must admit there has been an improvement both in mutton and fleece. All, however, are bought up to leave the country and our stock is short. Our farmers should turn their attention to sheep, for sheep demand only little, and very light attendance. Two hundred sheep can be cared for as easily as twenty cattle in the winter; they should have the run of big pens with constant access to an outside run, for sheep, more than any other animal, must have exercise and fresh air, be it ever so cold. They don't like damp weather, but cold weather they do not mind. There are no stalls to clean out, no chaining and unchaining, no milking, no conveyance of milk to the factory. The litter of a sheep pen need not be moved until the spring; they get higher, but no harm is done, and it is the best manure a farmer can put on his land. In summer it is easier to move 200 sheep from one enclosure to another than two head of cattle; they follow readily, and there is no racing about after them. It is calculated that seven sheep eat as much as one bullock eats in five months, whereas the sheep's tread is known as the "golden foot." Our natural June grass or wild pasture is exactly suited to them, and they only want an occasional top-dressing and chain harrowing to make as good and close a sod as is found in Hampshire or Sussex. If farmers would become flock-masters they could do with half the fencing, and sheep follow cattle to great advantage. The "big bite" of grass in early June can be fed off by cattle, finished with some meal on the grass; the sheep follow and bite closer and like a short nibble. They should be driven from one pasture to another at least once a week, for they hate the ground that has been stained by their own species. Then see how quickly they come into profit. A good Down cross will clip 10 lbs. of wool when a year old, and at the same time next year will have one or two lambs and another fleece to dispose of. There is nothing on the farm that pays so quickly or so well. Here we are, free of the diseases that decimated the flocks of England. The liver-fluke and the rot are comparatively unknown as is foot rot, all of them being plagues resulting from them being too thick on the ground in the Old Country. All that we have to guard against is contained in the old legend "Beware of the Dog." I believe this is a principal reason why more sheep are not owned, and the township laws allowing a proportion of

the value for worried sheep is not a method of compensation but makes up for the risk. It is a terrible risk and few owners have escaped heavy loss from this source; but surely it is avoidable if proper precautions are used. Opinions will differ as to the breed of sheep to be adopted, but I am not speaking of the sheep breeders and importers who have select breeding flocks and sell for fifty dollars a head. What we are talking of is why should not flock-masters of 300 or 400 good mutton sheep take the place of the scraggy, wretched, half-dozen crosses that one sees around the outbuildings of most of our farmers, and from which the itinerant drover has to procure his wares. I think no good reason except the dog worry exists, for keep and care are cheap, and so are the buildings. The cheaper and airier these are the better the sheep will do. Costly buildings and frost-proof would be worse than thrown away upon them. Are not all these reasons for trying sheep farming here? Early lambs are in great demand in large cities, and there is no risk having lambs come in dry, cold weather if 24 hours protection is afforded to the little ones. If proper precautions were taken I believe there would be no greater death rate among lambs coming in January than in May, and the ewes will take the ram after the first cool nights in August. But the early lambing is not the only recommendation. Sheep are scavengers and eat away the weed crop in the fence corners and out of them. Nothing but wild grass, natural pasture, can stand the constant bite of sheep and live.

I have shown that they are remarkably free of the diseases that assail flocks in the Old Country; that they take but little attention; come into profit sooner than any other flock; improve the farm rather than drain its resources; subsist on natural pasture; are best housed in the cheapest buildings, and possess every attraction for our farmers. I believe they will yet resort to sheep farming, and we shall see flocks of 100 where we now see ragged, disconsolate half-dozens. There are plenty of good sheep in the country for the propagation of rams that, put to the cheaper ordinary ewes of the country, will suffice for the production of large flocks of mutton sheep, and make them at least as common as the notable little flocks of breeding Shropshires, Southdowns, Oxford Downs, Cotswolds and Leicesters are now in all parts of the Province. It is foreign to the purpose of this paper to enter upon details concerning the feeding and care of sheep. Nearly every farmer knows enough of that, but I may say that the sowing of rape is employment for a slack season of the year, and sheep are greatly improved by feeding on it before going into winter quarters; they have better carcase and better fleece, and it pays, as also does early pasturing of them on rye, which can then be ploughed in time for the summer crop of something else.

What I should recommend would be the establishment of large flocks of ewes and the use of a Shropshire ram. This would improve the mutton and give more size than the cross with the Southdown. Shropshire sheep, too, are very hardy and thrive on land where Leicesters or Cotswolds would not succeed.

If a breeder is dishonest a shrewd man will often detect it in a short correspondence relating to stock, but it is well to remember that a breeder may be perfectly honest in his statements and still his judgment may be faulty from lack of experience or education. Especially is this true of young breeders.

Hog Raising in Relation to Future Agriculture.

BY MR. M'NISH, LYN, ONT.

Read before the Dominion Hog Breeders' Association.

In reviewing the history of past events one fact in particular is deeply impressed upon the mind, and that is this that the success of all great movements has depended upon the organization of all the forces in sympathy with them—to the concentration of all the energy of their promoters upon the object in view.

As one who takes a great interest in the agricultural industries of our country I view with pride and satisfaction the formation of this Association, which has for its object the elevation of a hitherto much neglected animal to that point in the public esteem to which his many good qualities entitle him.

The bulletin recently issued by the Ontario Bureau of Industries on the swine industry reveals to us the astonishing fact that this Dominion is annually importing from the United States over \$2,000,000 worth of hogs and their products.

Why is this? Because the Canadian farmer has yet to learn that lesson which he might acquire from the thrifty habits of his Saxon or Scandinavian brother in Europe, who, less favored by nature, forced to coax a livelihood from an often unwilling soil, is compelled by these circumstances to turn every product of the farm to the best advantage.

This Province alone, with its favorable climate and fertile soil, should produce as many hogs as are consumed in the whole Dominion, besides exporting large quantities.

During the past decade our system of farming has undergone great changes. Wheat growing, which has failed to yield the profit of former years, has been abandoned to a great extent and the virgin soil of the boundless prairie claims that industry for its own. Beef raising too, which at one time claimed a great share of attention, is likewise emigrating to the cheap lands of the far west, and we are looking about us for a more remunerative field for our labors, and if we as farmers, here in the eastern portion of Canada, wish to make a success of our calling we must look about us and adapt our methods to our changed circumstances. How can we do it? By dairying, some one says. Only partially, I answer. Dairying to be really profitable must go hand in hand with swine raising. The greatest success in farming consists in converting all unmarketable products into marketable products. The offal from the dairy has no market value; we have too long been literally wasting it; we must provide some means of converting this waste product into goods of some market value. The channel through which we can do this most quickly and profitably is by means of well bred, thrifty pigs.

The dairy interests of our country, under the fostering care of the Government, has made enormous strides during the past few years. New and improved methods of converting milk into marketable products are continually being introduced, but it is a lamentable fact that the part of dairying which makes it really profitable—swine raising in conjunction—has received very little else but neglect. It is, however, gratifying to know that the hog, as well as the cow, is at least having its claims recognized, and it remains with us to show our appreciation of the efforts of