

**Preparing Sheep for the Show.**

BY RICHARD GIBSON.

In inditing this in response to your esteemed request, we would say that it is only done to encourage the new beginner, the "entered apprentice," it may be, of the craft. The Master Masons have taken their degrees, and nothing that I can write would interest them.

The first consideration for the novice is to become acquainted with the breed with which he wants to become identified; after that he must assure himself of the fact that no slipshod methods will assist him. He must not anticipate an easy time; hence, only those who really have a love for their work can expect to be successful. This I want to especially emphasize. No day can be too long, no work connected with them too irksome. After making up his mind that he thoroughly loves all that will be required of him, as far as care and attention are concerned, it will become necessary to select the breed with which he is most conversant, or the one that will best suit his soil and climate, bearing in mind that the poorer and lighter the soil the smaller the breed he should select. The big, heavy fellows require luxuriant feed, and surroundings to correspond. After deciding upon the special breed, then we would say that to win one must have well-bred stock,—the better bred (that is, the nearer they are to great winners or producers) the better chance of winning. So it would be foolish for the young aspirant to throw away his time and feed on something unworthy, and this brings us to the first important part of the task.

After studying the breed selected, and knowing exactly what is required, then pick out about three times as many as are expected to be shown; they vary so much under different conditions of treatment: some do better on dry feed, others on green; some after shearing; again, during the cold weather most of them fairly revel; others do better on grass. So select plenty. And this brings to mind the fact that one must have a fair-sized flock from which to pick. Not that I would imply that a man with a small flock need be discouraged, but it is obvious that the owners of large flocks have a great advantage. One or two pointers may not be thrown away here. If one of the Down or medium-wool breeds has been selected, see that the individuals are matchy, both in covering of head, color of face and texture of fleece. The latter is gaining in importance yearly. Blue skins and black wool is not now tolerated; consequently, it would be folly to overlook those points when making the selection. One of the difficult problems is to get a pen just alike; hence, one of the principal reasons why coloring is practised; it makes a pen look more uniform.

After the selection has been made, the feeder's skill will be called into exercise. There are many supposed secrets as to the feeding adopted by the successful shepherd, and our imported feeders incline towards confirming that idea. *The secret is to get the sheep to eat all the grain they can and imagine they are hungry, never to overdo, but give them just enough to be scarcely satisfied.*

Feed.—The greater the variety the better (no balance ration; my reasons for this will be given in a subsequent letter). I have a relative that cannot eat pork; another that is fairly nauseated at sight of green peas. So study the likings of your charges. Oil-cake, oats, bran and peas will be the chief ingredients of the grain ration. Don't forget the oil-cake and bran—the latter is not recognized at its true worth, and the former is by too many regarded as a "foreigner." Give the strong food *during cold weather, and make the most of that time*, so that during the heated term light feed will keep them going along nicely without fevering the system.

We will suppose the lambs weaned, having had a creep in pasture for their grain ration. They will then run on the second-crop clover until the rape is ready, and if they have been taught to eat from the trough before they will readily continue that part of the diet. Our English friends use at this time what are called "lamb meals," consisting of peas, linseed, rye and bran finely ground together, with sugar, salt, ginger and caraway seeds added. This mixture is extremely palatable, and supplies all the essentials of milk. When the rape is finished the season comes around for indoor feeding. We would here advise liberal grain rations combined with all the turnips (Swedish) that they will eat. In England the rule was to stop the grain when the turnips were not relished. Certainly they will not eat as many here, but the principle in feeding must be recognized: that where lots of heating food is consumed (*i. e.*, grain) a cooling one must be used also. I need not say that in addition to above, clover, hay, salt and water should be supplied *ad lib.*

Shearing will be the next important event. *Do not shear too early, and shear bare.* We want to emphasize this point most emphatically. *All old ewes are a detriment.* After a few days we would recommend a good wash, using plenty of soap and hot water, especially caring for the head and legs. This removes dandruff, cools the skin, and prevents itching, the itching being allayed. I forgot to say that with a good liquid dip, and here we would advise that the same applied on the general flock a few times during the season will prevent the

annoyance sustained by them from flies, etc., which every sheep-breeder must have seen. Simply drive into their shed, and with a fine-nozzled syringe throw over them a light spray.

Until a good bite of grass is available in late spring, nothing equals the globe mangel. Then comes lucerne ready to cut about the middle of May, followed by oats, peas and tares, until the clover, rape, cabbage and turnips are ready in the fall. These give the flockmaster plenty of change from which to select. We here would impress the value of cabbage. Sow the seed as early in the spring as possible, working the ground as for turnips, only sowing the seed thinner—one pound to the acre. And how easily they are grown! No turnip flea to vex; and the distance between plants, 24 to 30 inches, makes the hoeing so easy.

As to house-feeding or outdoor, we favor a combination; a cool bank-barn during the heat of the day and nice fresh pasture for the remainder seem to me the sheep's paradise. Bear in mind, if housed at night, be up early in the morning, not later than 4.30—that is the time when they do enjoy their breakfast.

Now comes the most difficult part of my task: trimming and coloring. As far as the former is concerned, the better the quality of fleece and the truer the carcass, the less skill required. It is when an open fleece (amongst medium-wools) is encountered that the artist can show his skill. Continued use of the fine card, accompanied by the water brush, and shears, will make a great improvement. Each shepherd has his own peculiar combination of ochre and umber, and time and mode of applying it. These are artificial aids, and the beginner must not place much confidence in them. With proper judges, they will not deceive, and too much importance has been attached to them. Nobody enjoys seeing a work of art more than ourselves, but the dazzle and glint is all on the surface. Work up your wool well with card and brush; don't try to cut out, only take off the "fuzzy" or long ends. With long-wools, wash early after shearing, with strong soap; don't rinse; leaving in the soap creates a curl in wool; oil if you prefer—most do so.

But, upon whatever breed the young reader intends venturing, be sure and get the blood to begin with. We believe yet in pedigree of the right sort.

**Canadian Cattle Wanted by Old Country Feeders.**

Mr. John Hope, Assistant Commissioner for Scotland on the British Royal Agricultural Commission, deals, in his report upon various subjects, with the "Admission of Canadian Cattle."

In the chief feeding countries which he visited strong indignation was expressed that Canadian store cattle should be excluded from this country, while at the same time fat Canadian cattle were landed at our ports, slaughtered there, and then put into competition in our home markets against home-fed and home-bred stock. The all but unanimous opinion of those engaged in the feeding industry was that our ports should be again opened to Canadian stores. They were keenly alive to the necessity for rigidly protecting our home flocks and herds against the introduction of disease, but one and all agreed that it had not been proved by any investigations made hitherto that there was greater risk of disease being imported from Canada than from Ireland, from which country the store supplies for Scotland at present chiefly come. Their experience had been that the stores brought from Canada were peculiarly exempt from bovine ailments, and most, if not all, added that if the Irish stores were to be subjected to the same test as had been applied to the Canadian stores, quite as great, if not greater, evidence of disease would be found among them as had been alleged to have been discovered among the Canadian stores. At the same time, it was necessary to mention that most of those engaged in the breeding and rearing of stock held quite an opposite view, and argued that the supplies of store cattle available in Scotland or brought from Ireland were sufficient for the requirements of feeders, and that the present system of excluding the Canadian stores should not lightly be departed from.

"Northern Farmer" writes as follows in one of our old country contemporaries on the above subject:—

"A great many farmers in the North are being forced to the conclusion that it would be a good thing to open the ports again for the free entry of Canadian bullocks. We have considered all round and round the various points for and against home breeders, but now it is coming directly home to us in the form of having to pay the money. There is a scarcity of store cattle for the grass. The prices being paid are out of all proportion to the price of the finished animal, and it is absurd to suppose that they can return the cost of their keep unless there be a marked advance in the value of fats at the end of summer. The high price of cattle has, in turn, a serious effect on the price of grass, the letting value of which has not been so cheap for many years. First year's grass, letting at 25s. to 40s. per acre, will not pay the cost of seed and rent; yet such is the rate at which good grass has been let at some public sales in the North. Therefore, I say, let us have free trade all round, whether the flesh be imported dead or alive; otherwise, it cannot be fair trade. Such is coming to be the almost unanimous opinion of those who feed stock."

**Salt as An Article of Food for Stock.**

BY DR. WM. MOLE, M. R. C. V. S.

One of my former pupils, now practicing in the Eastern States, asks: Why have you so persistently advocated the use of salt for dairy stock? Will you please give some explanation of the process? Chloride of sodium is the chemical name for common salt, found universally as sea water, as rock salt, and brine springs. A transparent white cube crystal, soluble in water, but not in absolute alcohol, it has a highly diffusive power, passes rapidly into the blood, and hence reaches too small a distance along the intestines to influence these and act as a purgative. In the composition of the blood of animals there is six or seven times as much sodium as potassium, and we have called attention to the fact that the blood of animals is remarkable among tissues in the constancy of its composition. It is therefore necessary, for the proper maintenance of good health, that a certain definite amount of sodium chloride should be assimilated by the animal. An excess of potash or potassium salts is found in certain food substances, and this renders the presence of salt all the more necessary as an article of diet. A too abundant supply of potassium eliminates the salt in the blood to pass as urine; consequently the tissues of the body are called upon to yield up to the blood the amount of sodium chloride which it requires to maintain the composition of the blood at its normal condition. In the diseases, azoturia of horses, and milk fever or parturient apoplexy in cattle, we have these conditions present, an over supply or excess of proteid material in the system. In both diseases the animal is struck down, struggles violently for a few hours, then becomes comatose and dies.

We lay claim to be first in pointing out this line of treatment for both these complaints. The method of application to introduce it into the circulation must be well-known to every veterinary surgeon, so that it will be unnecessary to give minute directions as to dose.

The craving of an animal for salt is most imperative, when the diet consists largely of food very rich in potassium salts, such as the cereal grains—wheat, barley, oats; potatoes, peas, and beans.

On the other hand, when there is an excess of salt there is a craving for water to wash it out in the excretions through the kidneys and skin. In large doses it is an emetic; it is no uncommon sight in Ireland to see the peasantry of the inland counties, on their first visit to the seashore, drink large quantities of salt water, when it acts as an emetic, purgative and anthelmintic, and is looked upon as a sovereign remedy for many affections of a chronic character, such as rheumatism, gout, joint affections, etc.

Some of my Western friends tell me that there is no better way of stopping a stampede amongst a drove of cattle than to head them off with a bag of salt strewn on the ground. In his description, it was quite droll to hear that the first head that smelt the salt would stop, to be overthrown by the advancing hosts; then turn and stop again as quiet as a dove of sheep to lick up every grain fallen on the ground.

There are few animals that are not benefited by a liberal supply of salt; on the other hand, the pig is the exception to the rule. The pig has few sweat glands by which to excrete an extra amount of salt; those which it possesses are congregated around the snout, and are not sufficient to eliminate any excess of salt administered, even with the aid of healthy action of the kidneys; therefore brine poisoning takes place and death often results.

Where muscular strength is the object of feeding, a regular supply of salt improves health and vigor; thus it is that horses derive such benefit from partaking of it when fed on oats and beans as a regular diet. Fattening oxen should only have as much salt as will increase their appetite for food and so improve their condition.

The addition of salt to the ordinary food of animals does not increase the digestibility of the substances consumed, but it increases their appetite, tends to promote repair of tissues by its diffusion through the body, while it stimulates the rapid using up of its waste products.

The opinion generally prevails among dairymen that the quality of milk depends entirely upon the food supplied, most of them holding that certain feeds will make milk rich in butter-fat, while other feeds will make it watery and thin. The results of carefully conducted trials, in order to study the effects of food on the quality of milk, have generally shown that the composition is quite regular and little modified by the feed, though the total yield of milk is greatly varied in quantity; so that to my mind a safe rule is: Breed for quality, feed for quantity, and give plenty of salt.

[NOTE.—Since milk is not a miraculous product, any more than meat, or an egg, it is obvious that the cow brought to what might be deemed her "normal capacity" in milk production, must receive such a ration as will not only maintain her in good health, but provide her with proper raw material to be converted into milk, which contains a certain amount of solids that the cow will certainly not breathe in. Hence, let us run to neither extreme; but both breed and feed for a large flow of milk of superior quality. EDITOR.]