

OUTLOOK FOR THE SWINE INDUSTRY IN ONTARIO

Prof. G. E. Day, O.A.C., at the Winter Fair, Guelph

IN the year 1900, according to figures which appear to be reliable, Canada shipped to the various parts of Great Britain the product of 1,169,976 hogs. Ireland sent the product of 410,500 hogs; and Denmark the product of 1,957,000 hogs. In 1907, Canada shipped the product of 893,940 hogs; Ireland, the product of 428,656 hogs; and Denmark the product of 1,767,970 hogs. These few figures bring out the startling fact that in 1907, as compared with 1900, the Irish product increased 17 per cent; the Danish increased 62 per cent; but the Canadian product decreased 31 per cent. Figures for 1908 are not available, but the indications are that 1908 will make a worse showing than 1907.

If our trade with Great Britain in bacon is not a profitable one, and if the Canadian farmer can use the product of his farm to better advantage than he can in finishing bacon hogs, then this falling off in the export of Canadian bacon may be regarded as a matter for congratulation rather than one to be deplored, but the thoughtful person may be pardoned if he views with some alarm such a marked falling off in a very important industry. The gravity of the situation, and the importance of the industry, may render it not unprofitable to examine our present position more in detail, and, as far as possible, to free our minds from all prejudice while doing so. No doubt there are many causes for the present position of affairs, but we shall confine ourselves to a consideration of some of the principal ones, as follows:

THE FINANCIAL DISTURBANCE OF 1907

1. While it is true that the late financial troubles belonged primarily to the United States, it is also true that they had a widespread influence in unsettling the markets of the world. It is not necessary to more than mention this factor.

THE HIGH PRICE OF GRAIN AND OTHER PRODUCE USED IN FEEDING HOGS

2. When the price of grain is high, the farmer is tempted to sell his grain rather than feed it to stock. It is remarkable, however, that the price of feed in Denmark is higher than it is here, and the Danish hog feeder has to buy by far the greater part of the feed for his hogs, whereas, the Canadian farmer grows nearly all his own feed. In this matter, the Canadian has an immense advantage over the Dane, and can produce hogs at a much lower cost, yet the Dane has increased his output, and threatens to drive the Canadian out of the market. It was the matter of high cost of production which led me, in 1904, after a brief visit to Denmark, to conclude that the Dane had probably nearly reached his limit in bacon production. A farmer who could materially increase his output by buying high-priced imported feed was an unthought of possibility to me, but I now take off my hat to the Danish farmer and apologize for under-estimating his ability.

DISTURBANCE OF PACKER ON THE PART OF FARMER

3. This is the most regrettable feature of the case, and one of the most difficult to handle. It is necessary, however, to touch upon it, because, if we can believe what has appeared in the press, this factor has played an important part in curtailing the output of hogs. That we shall ever have a mutually satisfactory understanding between packers and farmers is scarcely to be hoped for. The whole question is a difficult one to approach from any standpoint, and the man who attempts to pour oil upon the troubled water is apt to find that the oil becomes explosive as soon as used, and he is liable to damage. It has been suggested quite frequently that packers should pay a uniform price for hogs throughout the year, but the futility of such a proposition can be easily appreciated when we take into con-

sideration that all products and substances which have a market value are subject to fluctuations in value. Even gold and silver are not exempt from this law, and it is beyond the power of man to prevent fluctuation in the price of a marketable commodity. Therefore, so long as hogs are fed for market, so long will there be variations in their market price. Until some more practicable scheme for bridging the gulf between farmer and packer is evolved, the matter may well be left in abeyance.

Let us now turn our attention to some of the things which have made for the success of the bacon industry in Denmark, for they are well worthy of consideration. Following are some of these factors:

1. Denmark has escaped much of this disastrous friction between farmer and packer through her co-operative packing houses, in the establishment of which she has had a much happier experience than we have had in this country. Private enterprise in the packing business is not by any means unknown in Denmark, but there are enough strong co-operative concerns to establish the farmer's confidence in the business. The co-operative principle has also practically eliminated the necessity for the middleman.

2. The country is small and factories numerous, so that long railway hauls are unnecessary. The Dane is also near the British market, and all these things tend to keep down the expense account.

3. To create and hold a market, two things are especially important. There should be reasonable regularity of supply, and uniformity of quality in the product. The Dane seems to fully appreciate this fact, and he aims to be in the market at all times so that his customers may not be disappointed and look elsewhere; and the uniformity in the quality of his product has given his goods an enviable reputation, so that Danish bacon commands a substantial premium over other

There may be other reasons for Denmark's supremacy in bacon production, but sufficient have been cited to give a clear idea of the difference between Canadian and Danish conditions, and this brings us to the most difficult point in this paper:

WHAT OF THE FUTURE?

Though there has been of late a marked decrease in our export trade, there has been an increase in our home market. It is impossible to obtain figures relating to this increase, but the opening up of our western country has created an important market for eastern bacon. It is not

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Care For The Colt's Feet

W. Staley Sparks, Manning Chambers, Toronto.

When foals run about on very hard ground, not only are the hoofs sometimes too much worn and the feet consequently tender, but the concussion may injure the bones and points of the limbs. It is not improbable that some diseases of these, which are supposed to be hereditary, may be originated in this way in early life.

The desirability of acclimating foals at an early age to have their feet and legs handled must be evident, and in practicing colts to this manipulation progress will have been made in teaching them to allow their hoofs to be trimmed and regulated by means of the knife or rasp. A foal should certainly have its feet trimmed, if only a little, at least every four months. This will give it confidence and teach it discipline. When this plan is followed, the foal will be easier to break.

A Spreading Roadside Commoner

T. G. Raynor, B. S. A., Seed Branch, Ottawa

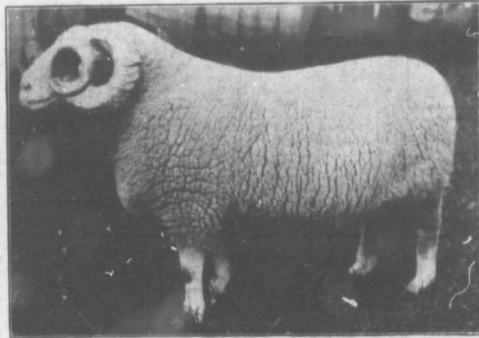
Among the roadside weeds which are gaining ground very rapidly is chicory. It is also called aucocory and four o'clock plant. It will close up its flowers during the dry heat of the day to open them up when there is more moisture in the air

as towards night under the influence of dew or rain. It has large blue or purple flowers and may be distinguished easily from the common blue weed in that its flowers are larger and are distributed here and there all over the stems especially in the axils of the many branches. Blue weed flowers all along the flowering stem.

It is a very bad weed to eradicate, owing to its large perennial root, which must be killed in some way before it can be exterminated. The best time to handle it is when a few plants, have located, to get after them by spudding them out and putting on some salt, gasoline,

coal oil, or other penetrating material that will kill the root.

The plant can never gain much headway in a cultivated field unless it is left in grass a number of years. In waste places, however, it spreads rapidly and fills the ground with coarse roots. It will almost destroy the field for pasture purposes, as stock do not like to eat it. Sheep may relish the early leaf growth, but when it gets stalks, they care nothing for it. This is a weed everyone should get acquainted with in the Farm Weeds Bulletin.



A Canadian National Winner

A Dorset Horn Ram, first prize and silver medal winner at Toronto, 1908. Owned by James Robertson & Son, Milton, Ont.

brands.

4. Denmark is a butter making country, and the feeding of hogs is found to be a profitable means of utilizing skim-milk and butter-milk. The extension of dairying in Denmark is no doubt responsible for the increase in bacon production, and whether the Dane has yet reached his limit in the production of bacon, depends entirely upon whether he has reached his limit in dairying.

5. The Danish government, the press, the packer, and the farmer are all working in harmony for the promotion of the industry.