

The Canadian Dairyman AND Farming World

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THE CANADIAN DAIRYMAN AND FARMING WORLD
PETERBORO, ONT.

TORONTO OFFICE:
Room 306 Montreal Club, 72 Queen St. West, Toronto.

PLOWING AND PLOWING MATCHES

Proper tillage of the soil begins with good plowing. Yet, notwithstanding all the improvements in modern agriculture, it is doubtful if as much attention is given to plowing to-day as twenty-five or thirty years ago. More plowing is done, but our experience would indicate that it is not as well done. The chief aim of the plowman of to-day seems to be to get over the ground, no matter how. The plow that will turn the widest furrow and do it in the quickest time is the favorite. There is more shallow plowing done than is conducive to the best plant growth just because it can be done in a hurry. There are some soils for which shallow plowing is the best thing, but on a great many soils, deep plowing and a thorough cultivation of the soil are necessary to the best results in plant growth.

The plows of fifty or one hundred

years ago were built on exactly the same principle as those in use to-day. The modern plow will do its work easier and better, but essentially it is the same kind of an implement as those used a couple of generations ago. Improvement in plowing must therefore depend more upon the skill of the plowman than anything else. If he is content to merely turn over the ground, there will be no improvement and the first essential in proper tillage will be done in a slipshod careless fashion that will have its effect on the future crop. The bulk of the plowing in this country is done in the fall, when there is not the rush, there is in the spring season. There is time, therefore, to give attention to the quality as well as the quantity of work done.

Twenty or twenty-five years ago the annual plowing match was as popular in every locality as the fall fair. The interest in these matches has largely died out and the number held in Ontario is very few. If an examination were made it would be found that where plowing match is regularly held and an interest taken in it, soil cultivation is at its best, and crop production most successfully carried on. The man who plows well will cultivate his soil well. In other words the best plowmen are the best farmers. For this reason more attention should be given to encouraging better plowing. A revival of the old time plowing match in every locality would help in this direction. Farmers' Institute workers are constantly on the alert for new features that will interest more people in their work. Why not try the plowing match? A series of these held every fall, and properly conducted would be of great educational value, in creating an interest in better plowing among the young men on the farm, and among the older ones too. Too much attention cannot be given to proper cultivation of the soil. Good plowing is at its foundation and should be encouraged in every way possible.

THE TRADE IN PURE-BRED SHEEP

The sheep breeders are in somewhat of a quandary. The 30-day quarantine recently imposed by the United States Government upon all sheep entering that country has deprived Ontario sheep breeders of their best and most profitable market. For years Ontario has been the chief source of supply for breeding stock for the big sheep ranches of the Western States and the source also from which many American breeders secured their foundation stock. Our splendid flocks have been built up largely because of having this profitable outlet, where a steady supply at profitable prices was always required. The 30-day quarantine will cut off this trade completely. While it might be possible to send through car lots with more or less safety, as it will pay to send a man along to look after them, small lots or individual animals cannot be put through quarantine except at a cost that would make the business unprofitable. The accommodation at ports of entry is usually of very inferior character and few highly bred sheep

would come through a thirty-day stay there with impunity.

The situation is a serious one and sheep breeders who have been depending on the American trade may well feel some concern as to the future. The only market open to them is the home market. Wool production was profitable a year ago, but it is not so to-day. The home market for lamb and mutton and the trade in export sheep with Great Britain are open to them. But a dependence on this alone means lower prices for breeding stock and a lowering of profits. The lamb market has been a very profitable one the past six months. Yearling lambs sold higher last spring than for many years past, and spring lambs have commanded a good price also. It may be possible to cater to the growing demand for choice mutton and lamb in a way that will make it profitable for the producer. Lambs fitted for the late winter or early spring lamb trade of our large cities always command high prices. But very few of our sheep men have given any attention to this trade. It may be possible to greatly extend it.

Then there is the growing demand for breeding sheep in the West and the Maritime Provinces. The trade with these parts of the Dominion has not been catered to as much as it might have been. Sheep breeders have had a more profitable market elsewhere. But with this cut off the demand in other provinces may be worth looking after, and may afford a market for a considerable portion of the surplus breeding stock, though lower prices would prevail than those obtainable in the United States. It is also possible to improve the demand for breeding sheep in Ontario. There are hundreds of farmers who do not keep sheep but might be induced to take up sheep-raising if conditions were more favorable. A drawback to the further development of the industry here is the danger of sheepworry by dogs. The law on this question is not as effective as it might be. A concentrated effort on the part of sheep breeders, who have been somewhat lukewarm in the matter, might induce our legislators to enact measures that would make sheep-raising on the average farm a safe proposition in so far as the dog question is concerned. With the American market closed more will have to be done towards developing the home market and the lines we have indicated may afford some solution of the difficulty in which our sheep-breeders find themselves.

THE BACON TRADE

There has been much said and written the past few months as to the future of the bacon trade. It is a question that concerns the producer as well as the packer. The latter has spent thousands of dollars in erecting large packing houses and equipping them for the trade. He cannot but be vitally interested in the future of this important trade, which shows signs now of petering out. If it does his investment in plant and equipment will be a dead loss unless he can turn it to account in some other line of trade.

But our concern is not for the packer. He is able to take care of himself. The farmer is also, for that matter, and perhaps, will not relish any advice on the bacon hog situation at the present time. However, it is not our desire to give him any advice, but merely to point to one or two things in the bacon hog situation that are worthy of the fullest consideration by every hog producer.

At the present time Canadian packing houses are not receiving one-quarter of the hog necessary to keep their establishments running to their full capacity. This means that it costs over twice as much to convert the live hog into bacon as it would under normal conditions. As to this, however, the producer need not worry much. But what does concern him is that this short supply leaves the field free for other countries to come in and displace the Canadian article in the British market. During the past year or two Denmark has been doing this with a vengeance and to-day holds a large portion of the British trade that was formerly ours. Are we going to allow the Danes to hold it and make no effort to recover lost ground, are questions uppermost in the minds of many in this trade at the present time. From what we know of agricultural conditions in both countries, Canada should be able to produce bacon as cheaply and of as good quality as in Denmark. On the quality score there can be no doubt. Canadian bacon has always stood high in the estimation of the English consumer. As to the cost of production we must be prepared to produce bacon and land it in Great Britain as cheaply as the Danes do or else quit the business. If we are not prepared to do this, our trade in bacon, which, taking a period of several years back, has been a profitable one for the producer, must go to the wall and our energies be directed in some other channel.

If we drop out of the export trade the outlet for our hog products will be limited to the home market. Is this market of sufficient importance and is the home demand large enough to make it worth while giving much attention to hog production? There are some who think it is and who believe that if the tariff on green and cured pork coming into Canada were properly adjusted, hog products would command a profitable price in the home market. We must confess to some misgivings on that score. An agricultural country like Canada, with only 5,000,000 people, does not afford a very large outlet for a product of this kind. No doubt, if the tariff were so adjusted as to keep out American pork, the home market would be better than it is. But under the most favorable conditions it could not have begun to take the bacon Canada has produced during the past ten years. The question simmers down to this: If we are prepared to curtail the output of hogs to a small number, less even than we are now producing, then a profitable market can be found for them at home. If not then a market must be found for the surplus outside of Canada, and that market is Great Britain, where we must come into competition with the Danes. Take any other line,