

A Chatty Letter from the States.

From our Chicago Correspondent.

October prices for live stock in Chicago were:—Corn-fed beefs, \$4.25@5.50; grass beefs, \$3.00@4.25; cows and heifers and yearlings, \$1.25@3.00; bulk at \$2.25@2.50; store cattle, \$2.00@3.40; with New York dairy calves (steers) at \$3.00@12.00 per head; western range "natives," \$3.00@4.40; Texans, \$2.25@3.85. Hogs—heavy, \$5.70@6.90; light, \$5.50@6.40. Sheep—muttons, \$3.25@4.25; lambs, \$3.75@5.75; western feeders, \$3.25@3.80; Texas sheep, \$2.30@3.50.

Very few ripe early or prime sheep have lately been arriving.

In the fall of 1887, when the pastures were parched and the hay-lofts and corn cribs were scantily supplied, and even straw was at a premium, it was not wonderful that cattlemen were sending in all kinds of cattle, regardless of prices. Feed of all kinds and water was scarce, and owners had no choice but to send their cows, steers and young stock to the butcher. This fall it has been different. Never was the country blessed with more abundant crops, and yet the marketing of cows, heifers, calves and yearling steers this fall has been without a parallel in the history of the trade. During the past three months the receipts of range cattle have been very heavy, while the supplies of native beef steers have been held back. There were two reasons for this holding back, the first of which was that owners wanted to wait until the range cattle supplies for the season were pretty well exhausted, and the second was that the cattle were in unfinished condition, and owners wanted to feed some of their new corn.

However, the fact remains that "native" cattle in the corn belt have been held back, and, coupled with the other fact that plenty of cattle are in the country, large numbers of which will be ready for market before range cattle have ceased to come, does not afford much hope for advanced prices this side of the holidays.

There are some of the most experienced cattlemen who think that there are too many store cattle, and too big a corn crop on hand, to allow prices for beef cattle of ordinary quality to rule very high for a few months. At the same time, the prices are better than one year ago, and the best cattle are selling at \$6.00@6.50—very good prices.

The western range cattle, the good to choice Montana beefs, averaging 1,250 to 1,500 lbs., have sold at \$3.50@5.30 this year, mainly at \$4.00@4.75. These prices are very much higher than last year, though the quality of the cattle was never equal to the present season. This makes a difference in favor of the butcher, but not much to the owners, as it costs them no more to raise and handle a crop of good beefs than a crop of poor ones. The western range cattle this year average in weight about 100 to 150 lbs. more than last season.

The wool tariff question is being agitated this year with great interest. It seems to be a question of wool raiser vs. wool user. The latter represents much the larger interest, of course; but it is not always the larger interest that is able to wield the most political power.

The sheep raisers, however, are generally preparing themselves for the emergency of free trade in wool, and are paying much more attention to the mutton qualities of their sheep.

Mention was made last month of Mr. Robert Strahorn's successful transaction in Texas cattle. The writer wishes to state that the original price he paid for his cattle in 1875 was \$6 per head.

A good many Montana and Dakota calves have been marketed at \$2.75@3.75 per hundred, averaging 200 to 300 lbs. This is the first year in which such stock has been marketed from the Northwest. The men who have marketed calves and yearlings and cows from the ranges have calculated that the prices obtainable at market were preferable to taking the chances of heavy winter losses on such stock.

Feeding Colts.

Prof. Sanborn, of the Missouri Agricultural College, gives in the following paragraphs some good suggestions on feeding of colts.

It may be assumed in the absence of analyses of the entire horse, that it contains less fat than any other farm animal, and its growth is therefore relatively larger than that of any other domestic animal. Experience teaches us that fattening foods are misplaced when fed to a growing colt. All young animals that I have fed have shown experimentally the marked necessity of easily digestible foods. Let the colt, when first fed hay, have choice clover and the best fine hay, ground oats or ground peas, or barley meal, to which add a mere mite of oil meal and carrots. Skim milk may well be added, it will give a very nitrogenous diet.

The analysis of mare's milk shows a greater ratio of albuminoids (flesh formers) to carbohydrates (fat formers) than cow's milk, which is conclusive as to colts' diet when young. Don't "pinch" your colts. Feed liberally. The colt may be pushed forward as rapidly as the steer. This growth, if not that of fat, as it need not be, need not give a spiritless or effeminate colt, yet I would not press the point of early maturity as I would that of the steer, for the body may outstrip the acquisition of matured powers. If for sale, and moral issues left out, the most money will come from quick growth and early sale. It may properly be noted that tests by Boussingault and Stewart show that a pound of colt is made with as little fodder as a pound of steer.

The second winter, straw may be fed with clover and hay. The skim milk may be omitted, while a little meal may be added. I object to corn as a diet for growing colts. A French investigator, by an elaborate test, found that oats were especially good horse food. By an electrical apparatus he found an excitable principle in oats that he called a nerve, and that crushed oats were more active and not so enduring as whole oats. Oats are, by practical men, understood to favor more speed and endurance in the horse than any other food.

About one per cent. of the colt's live weight should be given in grain daily, and limit his feed of hay to three meals a day, otherwise a horse will eat more than he can digest.

A correspondent of the Farmers' Review says that when curing hams, shoulders, or bacon, he uses a brine made of 1½ lbs. salt and ¾ lb. brown sugar dissolved in 1 gallon of water. Before applying the brine he rubs the meat, after it is thoroughly cold, with fine salt, and lets it stand a day or two to draw off any blood. Then he takes it up, drains off the bloody brine, repacks it and applies the cold brine, in which he lets it remain not less than five weeks. Eight would not hurt it, for the sugar would prevent it from taking too much salt.

When Should We Feed Our Roughest Food?

Writing to the Rural New Yorker, T. D. Curtis says: The old-fashioned way was to begin the first thing in the fall to feed the coarse fodder, and to continue feeding it as long as it lasted. This was considered the proper thing, because it got rid of the coarse stuff early in the winter, and generally before severe weather came on, and left all the best feed for the colder weather, with a little choice rowen, perhaps, for the cows after coming in milk in the spring. The real need of the cow's system was not considered—indeed, was not understood—nor was there any better knowledge about the character of the food. Their desire was to get rid of the "roughage" first, without a thought as to whether it was economy to feed so much bulky and carbonaceous food. The fact that the cow had been feeding on frosted grass and ripe, woody fibre, which contained principally carbon, a large portion of which was indigestible, was not considered a moment. The only thought was to use up the poorest first.

Many continue this practice to-day. The science of feeding is very modern, and the elements of food are of comparatively recent discovery. What little is known is slow in getting out among the farmers. But the readers of the Rural ought by this time to know that the two classes of food known as nitrogenous or albuminoids, and carbonaceous or carbohydrates, ought to be judiciously combined in about the proportion required for the sustenance or building up of the animal system. In the fall or early winter, dairy cows need an additional amount of nitrogenous food along with the carbonaceous croppings of the fields, or the coarse fodder that may be thrown out to them. They require some good clover hay and a grain ration, out of which to elaborate milk and keep up the muscular system. The carbon is naturally in excess in their food in the fall season of the year and early winter, until snow comes—especially if they are allowed to run in a field of uncut corn stalks from which the ears have been snapped. They need but a moderate supply of this kind of food, which provides only heat, and lays on fat. It is fat-producing, but it is not directly turned into butter-fat in the milk. It appears to go first to supply fat to the cow's system, and from this storage probably the fats are drawn to enrich the milk. But only so much is appropriated to heating purposes—in keeping up the normal temperature of the body—and stored up as surplus fat, as is digested and assimilated.

If there is a lack of nitrogen in the food to be combined with the carbon, the excess of the latter clogs the system, and goes to waste in the manure heap;—that is, nearly to waste, for the carbon in the manure is of little value. Beyond six or eight parts of carbon to one of nitrogen in food, is a waste of the carbon, when the weather is only moderately cold. In zero weather, a larger proportion of carbon may be fed and appropriated. It is therefore better to feed the more nitrogenous foods in the mild weather of the fall, and increase the amount of carbonaceous foods as the weather grows colder, and especially if the cows are exposed to the colder temperature, instead of being properly confined in warm stables, as they should be. In mid-winter, when the weather is cold and sharp, animals exposed to it will eat