

SHEEP AND SWINE.

WINTER MANAGEMENT.

The winter will soon be here, and our sheep will require that special attention which the cold months demand. There are comparatively few who have not learned—learned by costly experience, if no other way—that to neglect the sheep in winter, is a very unprofitable thing to do. All through the North, shelter is needed, and without it, it is useless to count upon profit in sheep husbandry. In some cases the sheep are not brought to the pens early enough, but are allowed to run on the pasture, without other food, until they fall away in condition, and it is found that the loss is difficult to retrieve. Start them on the winter in first-rate condition. When the frosts have touched the grass, bring up the sheep and feed them once or twice a day. When the weather is good, however, they should be allowed to run in the field, until it becomes quite cold, or the ground is covered with snow. When feeding is commenced, the oldest and poorest of the flock should be selected out for special care. They will need higher feeding than the others, and they should be fitted for the butcher as soon as possible, and if any happen to be in such condition as not to promise anything from such a course, it is far better to kill and skin them at once. It certainly will not pay to keep them through the winter, and have them die in the spring.

As to the number of sheep which should be kept in one flock, it will depend upon circumstances. The Merino has fully established the reputation of being able to do well in large flocks. But the long-wooled sheep can be kept in large flocks, also, if they have plenty of room, and if there is lack of room, it is not advisable to keep even the Merino in large flocks. Animals cannot do well, if they are so crowded as to contaminate the air they breathe, or prevent a free escape of the gases that come from their bodies. Sheep are peculiarly sensitive to bad air, it is said, but we do not know that they are much more so than other animals. It is a plain and indisputable fact that no animal system can be forced to live in an impure atmosphere, without injury to it. Sheep must have good wholesome air to breathe, and that necessity should be kept constantly in view when we are constructing shelter, and when deciding as to the number that shall constitute a flock. The sheep does not suffer much from the cold. If it is clear, the animal will not complain because the mercury is low. But they cannot stand much dampness, either under their feet or on their backs. Sheds should be so constructed that they will be open toward the south. If convenient, they may be so built that they can be closed if desired, but it will do no harm if they are permanently open on the one side; and if any shelter which was not especially designed for sheep, and which is not so constructed that it can be freely opened as here suggested, is utilized for the purpose of sheep sheltering, by all means attend to the ventilation. On no account shut a flock of sheep up in a place where the pure air will be exhausted before morning.

In the centre of a shed constructed for a shelter, there should be a rack about which the sheep can gather without crowding, and feed. The rack should be arranged so that it will not only hold hay, but also provided with means for feeding roots or meal. Keep the floor dry, and to this end use plenty of bedding, if anything is at hand that can be utilized for such a purpose. If an abundance of bedding cannot be had, be sure and clean out the place every day. It is hardly necessary to remind anyone that exercise is absolutely necessary. On no account deprive the sheep of exercise. Disease must follow such a neglect.

BERKSHIRE SWINE.

The Berkshire has been a favourite breed of swine now for fifty years. In that time, however, many important changes have occurred in their make-up, so they now stand among swine where the blood horse does in the equine race, and where Shorthorns do among cattle, combining elegance with symmetry of form and high breeding. Yet in all this they have preserved usefulness in the highest degree, and have been used within the last twenty-five years probably more extensively than any other breed of swine, in improving newer breeds giving elegance, firm bone, great muscularity, and good constitutional vigour.

In reference to the history and general make-up of Berkshires, the *American Encyclopedia of Agriculture* says:

"They are more uniform of colour than any of the white and black breeds, the fashionable colour now being white feet, tips of tails, and a little white in the face, the rest of the body being jet black.

"More than forty years ago, as we then knew and bred them, there were many upon which a sandy colour would appear. And they were larger boned and coarser in their make-up, but nevertheless, perhaps, containing more lean flesh (muscle) than at the present day; not so kindly in fattening, neither did they contain so much lard, but their hams, shoulders and bacon were, we think, superior to the more modern Berkshires, or those of to-day.

"The best type of this breed now have short noses; slightly dished faces; small, fine, erect ears; eyes wide apart; straight back, preserving its width from the neck to the rump; muscular hams and shoulders; the bacon pieces well broken with strips of lean, fine hams, short legs, excellent hoofs, and in killing showing but little offal. Their vigour makes them excellent gleaners, to follow cattle fattened in the field, and their weight, from 800 to 600 pounds, renders them sought after by the packers, especially those of hams and bacon.

"They have been with us always a favourite breed on account of their muscular development, as among the middle breeds, as the Essex have been among the small breeds. It is, however, not to be denied that they will not stand starving. They require strong feed and plenty of it, to reach the best development—and what animal does not? Nevertheless, we do not think they assimilate quite as much of their food, when the bulk of it is corn, as do some of the breeds more inclined to lard. Yet, no breed will reach good development on scant food, and when muscle as well as fat is wanted, the breeder or feeder would have to seek far for a hog better combining good qualities, and full medium weight."—*Prairie Farmer*.

A SMALL BREED OF PIGS.

An English contemporary, speaking of a breed of pigmy porkers, three sows and a boar from Nepal, on exhibition at the Zoological Gardens, London, says:

"This species is so rare, that since Hodson described these animals, fifty years ago, there has not been a single specimen attainable in Europe, and even the museums have been unable to get more than a single skin. They are very small in size, scarcely bigger than a large wild rabbit; or probably a better idea of their size may be formed by giving their weight at seven or eight pounds each. They are very active on their legs, running very swiftly, and they are very shy. Their skins are well covered with short, reddish-brown hair, or rather bristles; they are very clean

feeders, and also very cleanly in their habits. Their flesh is esteemed very good for eating; and thus these interesting little porcines are naturally the subjects of other contemplations than their zoological rarity. If they can be bred in the Gardens, the Society will find profitable results repay the price given for them, by disposing of the first offspring to other menageries; and the acclimatization of the subsequent progeny would seem to be well worthy of attempt, as they might be kept seemingly without offensiveness in the yards and gardens of domestic houses, and be fed upon potato parings, vegetables, and *debris* of food. They are very fond of rice, and will eat small portions of meat; but they will not touch the wash or greasy matters commonly given to ordinary pigs."

FATTENING SHEEP IN WINTER.

1. A good way is to begin early in December by giving in addition to straw, to each sheep each day for a couple of months, a pound of meal, grain, or oil cake.

2. When good hay is fed, the other food may perhaps be a little reduced.

3. Feed regularly. Sheep will do better on inferior food if fed regularly, than on good food if fed irregularly. Attested experience is in favour of feeding three times a day, morning, noon and night. In this many of the best breeders agree. Some, however, feed but once a day, and think it best. When this is done, the last feeding should be a considerable time before dark, for sheep do not feed well after dark.

4. Salt must not be neglected. As is well known, salt is not so necessary in the winter as in the summer; still, it is necessary, and should be fed at least once a week. Some breeders keep it before the sheep all the time, and this is the better way. Randall mentions the practice of Gen. Marshall, of New York State, which is to take the oats from the hay racks and place them in a box rack under cover. Then they are sprinkled with brine, and the sheep when hungry for salt are not only supplied with it, but, by salting the oats, consume all the straw.

HOW TO FEED PIGS.

A correspondent of the *Minneapolis Tribune* says:—"The nice point in growing pigs is to keep them growing. This is easily accomplished for the first three or four weeks by feeding the sow bountifully on nourishing slops, but the time comes very early in the life of a pig when it is impossible for the sow to supply nutriment as rapidly as they are assimilating the food, and, as they have not in the meantime been taught to eat for themselves, there comes a period of retarded growth. I usually prepare for this by providing a trough apart from the sow, to which the pigs can have access, and commence by giving them a little sweet milk, which they soon learn to drink greedily; this is gradually changed to skim milk, then to sour milk, buttermilk, or whey, with crumbs of bread scraps from the kitchen table, etc. As the pigs grow older I feed cornmeal cooked into a mush and mixed with whey, skimmed milk, and other house slops, and finally soaked corn, by which time they are old enough to take kindly to grass and clover, and this, with the soaked corn, keeps them growing rapidly. Do not depend too largely upon corn, but provide grass in abundance. A most excellent food for the purpose of increasing the flow of milk may be prepared by grinding oats and corn together, in about equal quantities by measure, and making a slop of the mixture. To this may be added oil meal with profit. Ground rye, barley, or wheat may be substituted for the corn or oats, and a mixture of all these grains will make an excellent diet; but do not forget the grass."