

## Sheep Husbandry.

### Cost of keeping different Breeds of Sheep.

A CORRESPONDENT enquires what is the difference in the cost of keeping the Leicester, and Cotswold, Southdown and Merino sheep? He also wishes to know whether the difference between the long and short-wooled breeds will compensate for the loss of mutton. These points are ably discussed in the *Genesee Farmer* for May, and we cannot do better than quote the remarks of our able contemporary. Though somewhat lengthy, they will amply repay perusal:—

"As a general rule, where sheep of different breeds are equally well bred, there can be little doubt, from the experiments of Mr. Lawes, that sheep consume food in proportion to their live weight. As, however, this is a matter on which many experienced breeders disagree, and as the question turns on this point, it may be well briefly to allude to these experiments.

"The breeds selected for the experiment were the Sussex Down, the Hampshire Down, the Leicester, the Cotswold, and half-bred wethers and half-bred ewes.

"The Sussex Down, which was brought to great perfection by the labors of Ellman, is a very small sheep, with short and very compact wool. This breed is admirably adapted for upland and scanty pastures, where larger breeds would starve. The mutton commands a higher price in London than that of any other breed.

"The Hampshire Down is a larger and coarser breed.

"The Leicester, brought to such perfection by Bakewell, is when pure, larger than the Sussex Down, but not quite so large as the Hampshire Down. Contrary to the generally received opinion in this country, it is really a small breed. It yields a large quantity of long wool, and, in rich pastures, possesses great aptitude to fatten. The Canadian Leicester, though a very useful sheep, is not the original Bakewell Leicester. He probably has a dash of Cotswold blood in him, and is much larger than the genuine Leicester.

"The Cotswold is one of the largest breeds of sheep. The wool is very long and of good quality. The mutton is of rather inferior quality, but the Cotswold fattens so rapidly that it has not inappropriately been termed 'the poor man's sheep.'

"The half-breeds used in these experiments were a cross between a Leicester ram and a Sussex ewe.

"The sheep for these experiments were selected by good judges, from the best flocks in England. Mr. Lawes says: 'Letters were written to breeders of eminence (those being generally selected who had obtained prizes for their sheep,) requesting them to select fifty wether sheep, born the same year, and representing fairly the breed required for the experiment. No limit was set upon price. The sheep were sent about the month of September to the farm, and they were kept upon ordinary food until the middle of November. At this time the sheep were about nine months old, having been lambed about the February preceding.'

"At the commencement of the experiment in November, the sheep being about nine months old, the fifty Cotswolds weighed on an average, 119 3/4 lbs.; the Hampshire Downs, 113 1/2 lbs.; the Leicester, 101 lbs.; the half-bred wethers, 95 lbs.; the half-bred ewes, 91 lbs.; and the Sussex Downs, 88 lbs. each.

"The experiments lasted from five to six months, the sheep being weighed at the end of every four weeks. The quantity of food consumed was accurately ascertained.

"The following table shows the average amount of food consumed weekly by each sheep:

	Oatcake.	Hay.	Turnips.
Cotswold ...	8 lbs. 1 oz.	6 lbs. 14 oz.	113 lbs. 4 oz.
Hampshire, ...	8 lbs. 0 oz.	7 lbs. 0 oz.	106 lbs. 10 oz.
Leicester, ...	5 lbs. 13 oz.	5 lbs. 9 1/2 oz.	83 lbs. 12 oz.
Half-bred wethers	5 lbs. 14 oz.	6 lbs. 9 1/2 oz.	82 lbs. 14 1/2 oz.
Half-bred ewes, ...	5 lbs. 9 1/2 oz.	5 lbs. 4 1/2 oz.	78 lbs. 0 oz.
Sussex, ...	6 lbs. 3 oz.	5 lbs. 14 oz.	79 lbs. 1 oz.

"The average rate of increase per head per week was:

Cotswolds, .....	3 lbs. 2 1/2 oz.
Hampshire, .....	2 lbs. 12 oz.
Sussex, .....	2 lbs. 1 1/2 oz.
Leicester, .....	2 lbs. 1 oz.
Half-bred wethers, .....	1 lb. 14 oz.
Half-bred ewes, .....	1 lb. 13 1/2 oz.

"By ascertaining how much water there was in the quantity of food consumed by the different breeds, we are enabled to see exactly how much dry food was eaten. This was done. Then, by taking the weight of the sheep at the commencement and at the end of the experiment, we are enabled to determine their mean weight. Thus, if a sheep weighed 100 lbs. at the commencement of the experiment, and 150 lbs. at

the conclusion, we should call its mean weight 125 lbs. Now, if this sheep eat three pounds of dry food per day, we say that the amount of food consumed by 100 lbs. of live weight would be 2.4 lbs. per day. (If 125 lbs. eat three pounds, 100 lbs. will eat 2.4 lbs.) Knowing the weight of the sheep, then, at the commencement and at the end of the experiment, and also the quantity of total food consumed (and the exact quantity of dry matter which it contained,) we are enabled to calculate how much 100 lbs. live weight of the different breeds consumed of dry food per head per day. The result was as follows:

Cotswolds, .....	2.16 lbs.
Hampshire, .....	2.01 lbs.
Sussex, .....	2.01 lbs.
Leicester, .....	2.15 lbs.
Half-bred wethers, .....	2.02 lbs.
Half-bred ewes, .....	2.03 lbs.

"In commenting on these figures, Mr. Lawes remarks: 'Although there is a general impression among agriculturists that large sheep eat proportionally less than small sheep, it is evident that equal weights of sheep consume equal amounts of food.'

"If this is true—and we think there can be no doubt on the point,—the small Merino sheep will consume much less food than the South Down, and still more less than the Leicester and Cotswold. In fact, a Spanish Merino sheep will, on the average, weigh not more than half as much as the above breeds, and consequently we can keep two Merino sheep on the same food as is required for one Leicester.

"We think it will be admitted that the Merino sheep, in proportion to size or live weight, will afford more wool than the Cotswold, Leicester or South Down; and it would seem clear, therefore, that so far as the production of wool is concerned, if fine Merino wool sells for no more than coarse wool, the Merino is the most profitable breed to keep. But of course it will not do to leave the mutton out of the calculation. There can be no doubt that Cotswold, Leicester or South Down sheep will afford more mutton in a given time than the Merino, and we think it is equally certain that they will afford more mutton in proportion to the food consumed. These breeds mature much earlier than the Merino, and the mutton, as a general rule, is of better quality, and certainly commands a high price.

"After all that can be said in regard to the relative advantages of the different breeds of sheep, much will depend on the taste and experience of the farmer—as well as on the character of the soil and system of agriculture adopted, and also on the relative price of mutton and wool.

"If a farmer has a good flock of sheep of any of the above breeds, it is not wise lightly to change the breed. If you have a good flock of mutton sheep, do not give them up, simply because wool happens to bring a high price, and you may think that it will, for the time being, be more profitable to keep sheep principally for their wool, because by the time you have effected the change the probability is that the market will have changed also."

### Knocking Sheep in the Head to Expel the Grub.

To the Editor of THE CANADA FARMER.

SIR,—I noticed in your paper, No. 8, some remarks respecting the grub in the heads of sheep. Now I will give my experience with regard to it. In the spring of '63, I lost six of my best ewes from the grub in the head. I tried Scotch snuff by blowing it in their heads, by putting it in a quill and blowing it up their nostrils, but to no effect. Some of my neighbours lost sheep the same year by the grub—one of my neighbours had a sheep that he thought would die, and to put it out of misery, as he thought, he struck it several times on the head with a club and left it for dead. The next morning when he went to the sheep pen, to his astonishment he found that same sheep running about the pen. He told me the circumstance, and I tried the same method on some half dozen of my sheep with good success, not losing any more. My plan is, as soon as I see that the sheep refuse food or look stupid, to strike them on the head with a hammer, or piece of wood sometimes, until their noses bleed. They immediately begin to snort and out come the grubs.

B. M. CLARK.

Ernestown, May 12, 1864.

NORRIS ED. C. F.—The above seems to us a very severe if not cruel mode of treatment, and quite as likely to kill as to cure. As, however, our correspondent gives his name in full, we publish the receipt on his responsibility.

## Washing Sheep—Merino Sheep, &c.

To the Editor of THE CANADA FARMER:

SIR,—R. G. T. gives directions for washing and feeding sheep for exhibition. Can any one tell the great benefit which sheep derive from washing, and in what way does it enhance the value of the animal? It appears to me closely connected with the practice of half shearing in January and February, only calculated to please the eye and deceive incompetent judges.

The practice of high feeding of breeding animals cannot be too strongly denounced and should be discountenanced at exhibitions, and I am glad to see the Board of Agriculture has made a move in the right direction in placing a wholesome check on the imposition practiced in shearing.

In the 15th of April No. 1 I notice two articles on the profits of sheep; the first on Leicester and the second on Merinos. After twelve years' experience with the Merinos I am satisfied to continue them, feeling confident that if they are not the most profitable they are equal to any other breed.

My flock has varied from 30 to 45. I have always fed hay with a moderate supply of turnips; I never feed grain. The yield of fleece has been quite uniform, never below five and a half pounds, nor to exceed six. I have obtained from 40 to 60 cents per lb. Last year (1863) the average weight of fleece was 5 1/2 pounds. My wool sold at 63 cents per pound, \$3 62 per fleece.

T. R.

Barton, County of Wentworth.

## To Make Ewes own their Lambs.

To the Editor of THE CANADA FARMER.

SIR,—In your last No. I noticed a question, How to make ewes take to their lambs when the ewes refused them? The best way, in my opinion, is to drive two stakes in the floor of the sheep-pen, and fasten them at the top so that the ewe cannot pull them apart; then put the ewe's head through between them so that she cannot run from the lamb. She will take up with the lamb in a few days at most. Give her plenty of food and water, and be careful to have her so arranged that other lambs cannot come near her. I have made ewes take with other lambs that were not their own.

BALSAM.

May 11, 1864.

## Another Cure for Grub in the Head.

To the Editor of THE CANADA FARMER:

SIR,—In 1861 my whole flock was diseased with grub in the head, so bad that they refused food, and some could not stand for days. I tried various remedies all to no purpose, and at last found the following a certain cure:—To one ounce vial of whiskey, add a teaspoonful of Scotch snuff, shake well, and pour some of the mixture in each nostril at least twice a day. Not one sheep has died under this treatment in this township that I know of.

ALEXANDER GORING.

Township of Niagara, May 13th, 1864.

GRUB IN THE HEAD.—We learn from an exchange that this disease has been making alarming havoc among the sheep, in various parts of the United States. In Rutland Co., Vermont, the loss from this cause is said to have amounted to "scores and even hundreds on single farms." The *Woodstock Standard*, gives the following remedy recommended as almost infallible by a farmer who has used it repeatedly:

"Take yellow snuff, in the proportion of one tablespoonful to a tea-cup full of water, and steep till a good strong liquor is produced. Inject a tablespoonful of this liquor into the sheep's nose once a day as long as necessary."

The *Boston Cultivator* says:

"We understand that in some parts of New Hampshire sheep are dying in large numbers from what is supposed to be 'the worm in the head,' and we are desired to give some information in regard to a remedy. If we were to give, in the briefest space possible, the best prescription within our knowledge, it would be that given a few years since by Dr. Dadd, now of Chicago, who on being asked what was the best remedy for the 'grub in the head of sheep,' replied, 'Grub in the belly.'"