

The Commercial

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WHEAT VERSUS CORN.

It has been a belief with a good many people that corn is almost a necessary food for fattening stock. In the corn districts in the United States, the people have been inclined to imagine that live stock cannot be raised to advantage without corn. People have been heard to express surprise at the idea of attempting to fatten stock without corn. We heard a railway official of a southern road scoff at the idea of Manitoba ever becoming a stock country, because, as he said, "you can't grow corn up there." Ideas, however, are changing to such an extent, that even in the great corn states, the belief is beginning to dawn that there are other grains besides corn which can be used to good advantage in feeding and fattening stock. The low price of wheat and the comparatively high price of corn this season, has led to experiments as to the feeding value of the two cereals. Probably the most complete and systematic inquiry thus far has been made by the secretary of the Kansas State Board of Agriculture, whose work suggests that of a crop of nearly 25,000,000 bushels of wheat produced in 1893 in that state, 4,059,000 bushels were used as feed for stock. The statement of the Kansas official shows that three-fourths of those reporting to the department, state that, pound for pound, wheat is superior to corn for fattening hogs (even with one-fourth unmasticated) by 7 to 35 per cent.; the average of these indicating a superiority over corn of 16 per cent., while the average of the other one-fourth of the reports indicate that it was considered of less worth than corn by 12 per cent.

With reference to the question as to how much live weight of hogs may be expected as a fair return per bushel of wheat fed, the report states that the average of all the answers is eleven pounds, and the variations from seven pounds, in a single instance, to as much as twenty pounds in one other; but nearly all put their figures at or above ten pounds. The report furnishes the following summary of conclusions in regard to wheat feeding operations:

In Kansas, under the conditions as to product and prices of wheat and corn existing in the years 1893-94-95, wheat has become a very unusual and very important factor in the grain-feeding of all classes of farm stock. It is superior to corn, pound for pound, as a grain to produce a healthful, well-balanced growth in young animals. Mixed with corn, oats or bran, it is much superior to either alone, for work horses. Fed to cows, it is an exceptional milk-producer, and for that purpose corn is scarcely to be compared with it. For swine of all ages, it is a healthful and agreeable food, giving generous returns in both frame-work and flesh, but fed whole, especially without soaking, is used at a disadvantage. Ground and made into slops, it is invaluable for suckling sows and for pigs both before and after weaning.

For cattle it has, at least as a part of their

grain ration, a very high value, which is much enhanced in the line of needed variety by mixing with corn, and in a still greater degree by mixing judiciously with bran, oil cake or other albuminous foods tending to balance the too carbonaceous nature of the clear wheat.

With corn and wheat approximating the same price per bushel, it is not unprofitable to feed the wheat: yet, if it can be ground, rolled, crushed or in some way broken at a total cost not exceeding 5 to 7 cents per bushel, to feed it whole and dry is unwise. It can be ground at a cost of 5c per bushel; and on a majority of Kansas farms for very much less.

If grinding is impracticable, soaking from twenty-four to thirty-six hours (the length of time depending somewhat upon the weather and season) is, for various reasons deemed desirable, but it is injudicious to the extent that its being moist facilitates swallowing without the mastication or the proper mixing with saliva.

This testimony regarding the value of wheat for feeding stock, should be very interesting reading to Manitobans. If wheat is as valuable for feeding purposes as corn, (and we now have the evidence of many authorities to the effect that it is), it should solve the question to the satisfaction of those who have been inclined to believe that raising fat stock could not be carried on to advantage without a liberal supply of corn for feeding purposes. The Rural New Yorker says that "Wheat is the cheapest grain food for all farm animals, especially hens. Many farmers have fed wheat this season who never used it before for feed."

On the strength of all this evidence now obtainable regarding the value of wheat for feeding stock, it seems that Manitoba farmers might safely abandon the cultivation of wheat for export only, and grow the grain largely for feeding on the farm. It is only lately that the value of wheat for feeding purposes has been understood. Since the price of the grain has fallen so low, experiments have been made to learn the feeding value of wheat, with very satisfactory results. The experience gained should be of value in Manitoba. Many farmers never think of using their wheat for feed, no matter how low the price of the cereal might sink. In the light of the knowledge now gained by recent experiments, it appears that wheat is a very valuable grain for feeding to all kinds of stock, either for fattening, or for growing or working animals. For growing and working animals, it is claimed to be more valuable than any other grain. Why then, should not wheat be used freely as a feed grain? While prices are so low it would evidently be good policy to use it freely for feeding stock, as used in this way it will make a better return than if sold at the market price. With this evidence at hand, there would appear to be no reason why Manitoba should not become a great stock country, as well as a great producer of wheat, as the belief that corn is necessary for raising stock to advantage, may now be safely abandoned.

FLAX SEED AND LINSEED OIL.

Owing to the short crop of flax seed in the United States and consequent higher prices, shippers have been buying India flax in

England. Crushers at Atlantic coast points have been able to import the India flax as cheaply as they could purchase the home grown seed. The flax crop is about all produced in Minnesota and states west of the Mississippi, which makes it subject to a high freight rate when shipped to eastern points, and at present prices in the west, with freight added, the imported seed can be laid down quite as cheaply at Atlantic coast points as the domestic article. Chicago is the great primary market for flax seed, and receipts there have only been about 40 cars per day, as compared with an average of 150 cars daily in normal crop years. This indicates clearly that the crop is decidedly short.

The outlook for prices of linseed oil, with prices for the raw material so high, is of course very strong. There is another factor also which should affect prices of oil. This is the low price of oil cake meal. England is the great market for cake, but owing to the low price of grains, the demand for oil cake for feeding stock has been greatly curtailed, and prices have declined. Crushers find that the decline in the price of cake is a serious matter for them, and if they are to continue the business at a profit, they will have to get a higher price for the oil to compensate them for the decline in the linseed cake. Indications therefore seem to point to high prices for linseed oil. During the dull winter season it is not likely that prices will advance materially, but the opening of the spring trade will no doubt bring higher prices. With the high price of seed and the low price of cake, it seems hardly possible that crushers will do otherwise than insist on a considerable advance in linseed oil.

THE WHEAT EXPORT ROUTE.

The people of the old provinces, Montrealers in particular, are puzzled and agrieved over the fact that Manitoba wheat is being exported via the Erie canal and New York, instead of via the St. Lawrence and Montreal. The reason of course is that the New York route is the cheaper. New York offers better shipping facilities and lower ocean rates than Montreal. As Canadians, we in the West would prefer to see the Canadian route made use of, but the keen competition necessitates the use of the cheapest outlet. At the same time it is not a matter for surprise that some Montreal people should feel considerably worked up over the situation, and while passing it may be stated that much of the talk by Montreal grain men against Manitoba shippers, on account of alleged mixing of wheat at Fort William, is simply giving vent to their feeling of soreness over the loss of the Manitoba trade. Another reason why Manitoba wheat goes via New York is owing to the fact that Winnipeg shippers find it an advantage to trade with the large New York exporters. In discussing the export route of Manitoba wheat, the Montreal Trade Bulletin says:

"It is contended that if our railways would carry the grain from Midland, Owen Sound, Collingwood and Sarnia to Montreal at rates equal to those of the United States roads from