

Roscommon Sheep.

Ireland's only native breed of sheep, the Roscommon, is a long-wooled, white-faced variety, which, for size, robust constitution, wealth and weight of flesh, can hardly be excelled. With an association of breeders and a flockbook, organized in 1896, protecting their interests, such a breed of sheep is calculated to prove a tower of strength to their breeders in the Emerald Isle. Unlike some other counties of Ireland, Roscommon has mainly confined her attention to the breed of sheep she claims as native. This fact is due rather to the high character of the native Roscommon sheep than to any prejudice on the part of breeders, who, it must be said, have been energetic and successful in the improvement of their sheep. Under the modifying influence of soil and climate in other countries and districts they exhibit considerable variety of type and character, but the sheep at present known as the long-wooled Roscommons are indigenous to the County, their origin dating back for centuries, and they have shown a gradual improvement in type, particularly during the last fifty years. It is held by some authorities that the present breed is the result of crossings with English blood, but the general consensus of opinion amongst old flock owners in the County is that they are the native breed, improved by judicious blending of the various predominant qualities of the sire with the flock; that is, by taking advantage of the valuable peculiarities, encouraging their development, and by degrees rendering them more permanent.

It must have been very gratifying to lovers of the breed to find that at the Royal Dublin Society's show in 1895, the Challenge Cup of the long-wooled classes was carried off by three superb Roscommon shearling rams from the flock of Messrs. Cotton, Longford House, Castleria, which weighed at that time 21 stones, or 294 pounds each, all showing well-sprung ribs, symmetry and quality of wool. Mr. Matthew Flannagan, of Tomona, Tulsk, had the premium winner in the aged class at the Royal Dublin Show, a four-year-old ram that weighed 27 stones 12 pounds, or 392 pounds, and the same breeder had the second-prize aged ram in 1897, that weighed 438 pounds. The first-prize pen of three yearling Roscommons, represented in the accompanying illustration, winners of the first prize for pen of three at the Royal Dublin Winter Show in 1903, dressed an average of 43½ pounds per quarter. Enough has been written to indicate the valuable claims of this variety to a place amongst the favorite breeds of the ovine race. All sheep offered for entry in the Roscommon flockbook are carefully inspected, their breeding traced, and in the right ear of those accepted a shamrock mark is perforated.

The Farmer's Side of Steer Feeding.

To the Editor "Farmer's Advocate":

I was much interested in Prof. J. H. Grisdale's experiments in fattening hogs with and without stock foods. I also read his and Mr. Wing's experiments in regard to the cost of producing beef at different ages, and I must say I do not agree with them. I do not think they are relative; they seem to have forced their cattle up too much when they were young, and, naturally, they did not gain as much as they should do when they were older, making a poor finish.

Some of our most intelligent farmers say that the 200-lb. hog at eight months old pays the feeder better than the same weight at six months, because they can utilize more of their cheap foods, such as roots, and for the same reason I claim that a 1,400-lb. steer at three years of age pays the average farmer better than the same weight at two years or a little over. I think it is a loss to farmers to fatten their cattle up too much when young, losing the use of much of their cheap foods, which would only go for manure, as there is no market for them, and in most cases it would not pay to take them to market. I would say it pays better to build good frames when young, and leave the fattening period to the last, if it does take a little longer utilizing all their feed. I have been fattening three steers this winter, that have gained 880 lbs. in four months, as they were put in the stable on the 26th of November, being an average gain of 293 1-3 pounds, at a cost of four cents per pound, allowing for the value of food consumed, and taking into account the worth of the manure and gain in price during the feeding period.

Perth Co., Ont.

Directions for Making a Brank.

To make a brank or iron-headed halter for leading an unruly beast, take a piece of 3-inch round iron three feet long, and bend into an oval-shaped loop, the loop to be 2 ft. 3 in. in circumference. Weld the loop, leaving the remaining 9 inches projecting out in front, in the end of which insert a ring to attach a rope. Then punch a hole or put a staple in either side of the loop to attach straps, the one with a buckle, to fasten over the animal's head; 1½-inch straps are required.

Wellington Co., Ont.

FARM.

Growing Roots and Vegetables.

Regarding my method of growing roots and vegetables, I might say the last two years I have used ground on which I raised buckwheat the previous year, which I consider the best for vegetables. I harrow the ground as soon as grain is harvested, top dress with barnyard manure made during summer and fall until snow comes, and plow early in fall about four inches deep. In spring I harrow, cross plow, and harrow again thoroughly; drill three feet from center to center, making drill a good depth; manure in drills, between 25 and 30 double loads to acre; use about 260 pounds of a complete fertilizer per acre, putting it as near seed as possible. I use a hand seeder for small seeds, and roll drills after seeding with horse roller. My first cultivating is done with attachments belonging to seeder, and for breaking the crust on top of drills of mangels and sugar beets it works well. After that, and at least once a week, and oftener if possible, I use the horse cultivator, and I consider the cultivating to be the most important part in raising a good crop of roots, while potatoes require the same. I mould my potatoes with the plow, making the drills as large as possible. As this is my first attempt at describing any of my farm work, I do not know whether it is right or not, but will say that I have followed the instructions you have given the sugar-beet growers in Ontario with success in all root crops.

Elgin Co., Ont.

FRED DOW.

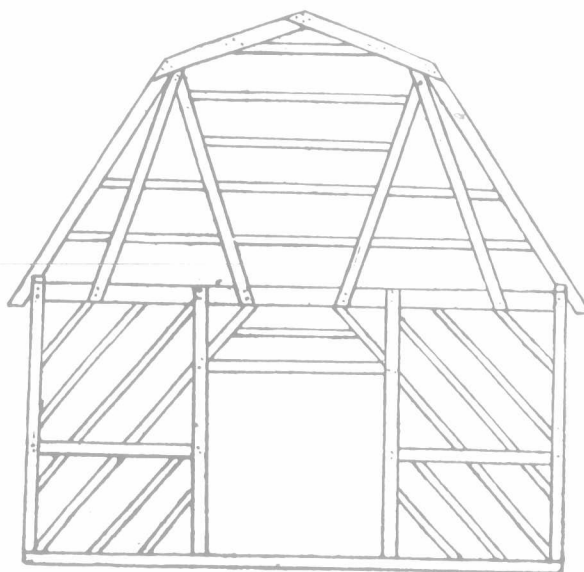


Roscommon Ewe Lambs.

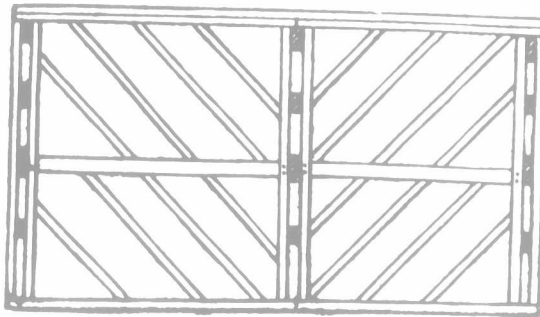
First-prize pen at Royal Dublin Winter Show, 1903. Dressed weight average 43½ lbs. per quarter. Bred and exhibited by Matthew Flannagan, Tomona, Tulsk, Ireland.

Plank Barn Frames.

Several letters of enquiry regarding plank barn frames have appeared in the "Farmer's Advocate" in the last few weeks, indicating a special interest in economical barn building, the cost of timber for frames being now so high as to render building a serious proposition. The conviction is gaining ground that heavy timbers in a barn frame are unnecessary, and they are certainly very expensive. In a letter to this paper, appearing in the February 23rd issue, Mr. W. A. Dryden says of the barn, a plan of the basement of which appears on the same page: "This barn is 114x54 feet, with side posts 18 feet long, and the height from the ground to the peak of roof is 54 feet, yet there is not a solid stick of timber in its construction."



Gable End, Completed Frame.



Single Bent of Frame.

struction. The strength of a plank frame depends altogether on the way in which it is braced."

Mr. W. E. Leland, in the Maine Farmer, of March 23rd, 1905, in a letter, accompanied by the drawing reproduced on this page, gives the following description and instructions regarding the construction of the plank frame:

There is a great saving of timber, the largest used being only 2x8, from that down to 2x4. Less men and time are required to erect these barns, and they are stronger and will stand the pressure of the hay and grain from within and the buffeting of the winds from without, with less rack and sway than solid timber barns.

In erecting the frames of these barns, the first step is a good, broad, firmly-placed foundation, built of stone and cement, laid below the frost line. With this foundation to rest the plank upon the frame is raised. No sills are used, the upright studs taking the place of posts; two for each post are set on the foundation on each side of barn, between these is placed and spiked the cross plank, extending the width of barn, tying the two sides together. The scantlings on each side of barn floor, forming center posts, are then raised and spiked to this cross plank. Upon outside of each upright is spiked a plank of the same size as, and parallel with, the first cross plank. This gives three 2x8's for cross sills through center of barn, each joint, or band, being fixed in this way. End joints, using boards instead of plank upon outside, gives the bed-work of the barn. At the sides of barn between uprights in place of sill, a plank is firmly spiked; this holds the uprights in place, and prevents working sideways, while the thoroughly spiked cross planks prevent all movement in other directions.

Having this solid foundation at sides of barn upon which to rest floor sleepers, we have to build a rest for inner ends. This is done by spiking a 2x8 to the uprights directly under the cross planks, one on each side of upright, extending entire length of barn on each side of floor space. These are strengthened by bracing, and by facing the upright with plank resting upon the foundation and fitting under bed scantling, thus forming hollow box for post. Having placed sleepers and floor, the stringers for floor over tie-up, and such other floors as are desired are fitted; with these to work upon, the plates are raised, 2x6 being used, the walls studded with 2x5. These studs are placed diagonally, thus each band helps to brace its neighbor. Some are boarded in this way, but equal satisfaction is given by horizontal boarding. The purlines are built in same way as other portions of frame, 2x7 being the right size; 2x6 are used for rafters, the pitch to suit builder. Many of these barns are built with hip roof; this gives great amount of storage in the roof and a good-looking barn though the writer is inclined to favor the steep, plain roof, as being the more economical and giving better appearance.

Potato Culture.

(Ottawa correspondence.)

In giving evidence before the Agricultural Committee the other day, Mr. W. T. Macoun, Horticulturist at the Central Experimental Farm, Ottawa, referring to the culture of the potato plant, said that every year there was from 20 to 50 per cent. loss from blight, which, experiments had shown, could be prevented by spraying with the Bordeaux mixture. There was also a great loss every year in the potato crop, owing to improper methods of culture. According to recent statistics the average yield per acre of potatoes in Canada was 123 bushels, and in the Province of Ontario only 115 bushels.

"Just think," said Mr. Macoun, "what the farmers are losing each year when, by proper methods of culture, it is possible to grow 500 bushels per acre. At the Experimental Farm last year," Mr. Macoun said, "the highest-yielding variety of potatoes grown produced 690 bushels of marketable potatoes per acre, or 772 bushels of marketable and unmarketable tubers. This yield was based on the returns from a small plot. In the field crop the best yield was 370 bushels per acre. This," said Mr. Macoun, "shows that the farmers of Canada are not making the best use of their land where potatoes are grown. Their average yield is far too low."

Mr. Macoun then dealt with the question of varieties. He emphasized the point that farmers should pay more attention to the selection of varieties, as thousands of dollars were lost each year by growing poor kinds of potatoes. The largest yielder at the Experimental Farm last year was the Vermont Gold Coin, which produced 554 bushels per acre, and the poorest variety grown was the Early Andes, which yielded only 123 bushels per acre, or a difference of 431 bushels between the best and poorest variety. The speaker said that this should bring home to farmers in a forcible manner the importance of securing good varieties. He also stated that much better crops would be secured if the potato field was cultivated six times during the summer instead of three times, which is usually done.

"In cutting potatoes intended for seed," Mr. Macoun said, "two or three 'eyes' should be left in each piece, otherwise the crop would not be so large. The seed should be planted as soon as possible after it was cut, or if this could not be done, it should be sprinkled with land plaster. Seed left exposed to the atmosphere for some time before it was planted would not give as large a crop as if it were planted immediately." Alluding to the value of spraying, Mr. Macoun said that all farmers should use the Bordeaux mixture on their potato crops for the prevention of blight.