

# FARMER'S ADVOCATE

AND HOME MAGAZINE

\* AGRICULTURE, STOCK, DAIRY, POULTRY, HORTICULTURE, VETERINARY, HOME CIRCLE. \*

Vol. XXXVI.

WINNIPEG, MANITOBA, NOVEMBER 20, 1901.

No. 538

## The Interests of the Rancher Imperilled.

The record of general prosperity for the Western farmer has been marred by the report of losses to the ranchers by fire, insufficient transportation facilities and low prices for any cattle but the tops. With regard to the last two causes for complaint, several suggestions have been made with a view to remedying the troubles. The price for export stuff has only reached \$3.50, while the same class of stuff ranging in weight from 1,150 to 1,150 lbs. is worth at Chicago \$5.10 to \$6.60. The ranchers are naturally unable to see where all the difference in price should go, and are talking seriously of shipping a few train loads to the Chicago market. The difficulties of transportation for the buyers have evidently been overcome, but judging from the Western Stock Growers' Association there is yet ample room for improvement. The Moose Jaw yards are specified as inadequate to the traffic, which is only too true; the watering place is bad, being merely a sort of pond hole, which becomes a mudhole when cattle get into it. Should three or four train-loads arrive at once, the accommodation would be entirely inadequate. This season fires have been bad, through negligence on the part of the railway men. Severe losses are reported, in one case due to the section men, the foreman of which was fined \$50. The country from near Stair to Red Deer has been burned over, and the ranchmen in that district are out their winter pasturage as well as their hay; in fact, so serious has been the menace of railroad fires become, that the people are talking of suggesting Government interference. The question mentioned, together with that of land leases, water rights, and the breaking up of ranches by newcomers settling on the water privileges, owing to which the range cattle will not come there for water, and also the cattle-and-sheep controversy, might well form the basis of work for a Government commission. With regard to land leases, the Government might well indicate a large area of country in which no homesteading would be allowed and reserve it for ranching. There is undoubtedly a large area of land suitable only for ranching, which it would be folly to attempt to crop owing to light rainfall, etc. Such lands might well be reserved, especially in view of the fact that in other parts of the Northwest are large areas much better suited for general farming. Locations should also be mapped out in which sheep-ranching could be carried on, and encroaching on the cattlemen or vice versa, be avoided. While a few men believe that the two classes of live stock can be run together, really practical men believe that it can be done profitably. Unless measures are soon taken, the range will become over-crowded, as has occurred in some districts south of the river, and the ranching business will be destroyed. Properly administered, the ranching country of the Canadian West will stand, standing as it does at present, only the crowding out of the cowboys to go further from the towns, etc. The Dominion Government should appoint a commission, composed of Western men, to investigate the problem of the range.

## Straw Likely to be Poor Feed this Year.

In consequence of the falling off in the demand for stockers, there will doubtless be many more young cattle carried over by farmers than would have been the case had the prices for stockers been maintained. A good many people, going on the experience of last year, may undertake to winter stock principally on straw. Last year the straw, although very much bleached with the continued wet weather during harvest, proved to be good feed, and stock wintered remarkably well on it, but the straw of this year's crop is of entirely different character. The exceedingly hot, moist weather during the growing season caused a rank, soft growth of straw (this is especially true of Eastern Manitoba). Rust was exceedingly prevalent in the coarse grains, and the long weathering during harvest greatly injured the feeding qualities of the straw. In the Territories, where the straw was bright and clean, it was not affected so badly by the weather, and will doubtless contain considerable nutriment. Altogether it seems improbable that this year's straw will make anything like as good fodder as that of 1900.

Some of the early-threshed straw has been spoiled by the wet, and the hay in some localities is of rather an inferior, washy quality. Cattle feeders will require to supplement the rations with some chopped grain. It is exceedingly poor policy to allow stock of any kind to lose flesh during the winter months; it costs more to replace it than to keep it on.

## Dehorning Beef Cattle.

The question of whether or not to remove the horns of cattle intended for feeding is one upon which there is very little to be said in the affirmative. Humanity, utility, and the unanswerable argument of market discrimination against horned beefs all urge the removal of these useless and often unsightly appendages. Among the great advantages of dehorning may be mentioned the saving of space at feeding bunk, hay-rack, shed, watering tank, or wherever cattle congregate; less danger of injury in shipping; a more uniform appearance; and, most important of all, the fact that, other things being equal, horns deduct 10 to 15 cents per 100 pounds from the selling price of the cattle. This is especially true where they are intended for further shipment alive; in fact, some of the Eastern shippers have instructions not to buy horned cattle if they can possibly fill their orders with dehorned animals of the required weight and grade. This, of course, narrows the competition, and instead of being readily picked up for eastern shipment or export, a bunch of horned steers may have to beg a buyer for local slaughter at a much greater discount than named above, compared with what they would have brought if dehorned. This, of course, does not always hold true, depending entirely upon the supply. With light receipts of cattle suitable for their purpose, shippers and exporters will not always pass a drove of cattle simply because they are horned, but when the market is flooded with their sort of cattle they develop a very discriminating taste, and "can't use" stock that they would perhaps have been glad to get the day before.

We believe that it is to the interest of every man who raises or feeds cattle to dehorn them, and the younger it is done the better. This of course applies only to cattle to be fattened for slaughter. There is no valid argument in favor of dehorning breeding animals, and many against it. There will remain a few per cent. of truly connoisseurs of that shorn from the thought of fattening, and for that reason some might dehorn. Some people would wish the cattle to be castrated, and some would wish them to be castrated and dehorned, and some would wish them to be castrated and dehorned. Report

## Anthrax at Swift Current.

So many reports have been published regarding this outbreak, that the fact will be of interest to our readers. The origin of the disease is entirely unknown, although Dr. McEachran believes that years ago the buffalo had the disease, and seeded the ground with anthrax germs. Three thousand three hundred sheep died, not all from the disease; 800 of the number died from the effects of the vaccine used as a preventive. The disease had existed in the flock for some days before being recognized, and several post-mortems were held by Mr. Andrews and his shepherds, assisted by a veterinarian and Territorial botanist, with a view to finding out the cause of the disease. A young shepherd who had assisted in the post-mortems got a sore hand which became so serious that he had to go to the hospital, where on the recital of the history of the case, Dr. Smythe, the attending physician, suspected anthrax, and in a microscopical examination made certain his suspicions. To Dr. Smythe, of Medicine Hat Hospital, belongs the credit of the recognition of the disease. The sheep were removed to fresh grounds, and the ravages of the disease stopped. The veterinary division of the Department of Agriculture then sent up some anthrax vaccine, which again started up the mortality, one vaccine causing the deaths of eight per cent. of those inoculated. A supply of another make of vaccine was then procured, and the remainder vaccinated, and the mortality fell to 0.91 per cent. The heaviest mortality was amongst the fat wethers. Three horses died from the vaccination. One of the strange things about the investigation is that the Dominion Government's veterinarian first sent to the outbreak was without a microscope. It is passing strange that the Department does not provide at least a microscope for their men holding such responsible positions. The salaries, except of one or two of the Ottawa functionaries, will not warrant the purchase of a good instrument by the veterinarian.

## Look Out for Warbles.

Although Western Canada live stock has in the past enjoyed a rare freedom from parasites, recent examinations of hides show that warbles are beginning to infest cattle from the range. The warbles have, doubtless, been brought in by eastern stockers, which have released their guests on arrival on the grazing lands of the Territories. The larva, once released, undergoes their life cycle and in another form infest other stock, which later on develop the warbles, with the result that the hides are much impaired. Destruction of the larva is the surest method of prevention of this hide spoiler. A mixture of fish oil and carbolic acid, 1 ounce of the acid to a gallon of the oil, applied with a brush along the back, is very useful as a deterrent to the ravages of the warble fly (Hypoderma bovis). Owing to the impossibility of applying such remedies to the range cattle, it is to be hoped that the larva of the warble fly will find it impossible to withstand the climate of the West. The various mixtures applied to the backs of cattle are with a view to stop up the breathing holes of the warble in the skin and thus cause the death of the larva.

## A Disease of Horses' Feet.

Several cases of what seems to be a disease of parasitic origin affecting horses' feet have been seen in the Territories this summer. The disease affects the top of the hoof (coronet) and causes extreme pain and lameness, rendering the wildest range horse so lame that a person can approach it and pick it over. The use of antiseptics, such as carbolic acid solution (5 per cent. strength), and iodine have a good effect in the earlier stage. A combination of gum camphor and carbolic acid, or much of the acid as will dissolve the camphor, applied with a small wire will be found very useful. The disease is supposed to have been introduced by some horse brought into the Territory from south of the boundary. It is a matter which deserves investigation at the hands of some of our veterinarians.