

Report of the Commissioner of Agriculture and Arts for the Year 1872.

AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS INCOMPLETE.

The Commissioner, in presenting his report, finds it necessary to refer to the incompleteness of the information contained. Partial returns of the products of the season are of much less value than complete returns would be if they were laid before us. They do not enable us to say what is the average per acre of the country. From the crop return given we can only guess at those not given, and consequently at the general average. Thirty-one electoral divisions have complied with the circular sent by the Commissioner to the secretaries of electoral division agricultural societies. He thus refers to the subject:—

"With reference to the harvest of the past year, I regret that so large a number of agricultural societies failed to make their returns, as desired in the circular issued from my department early in the fall." As some consolation for our want of the valuable information that a more complete report would have given us, he says:—"As no answers have been received from several of our best counties, it is not improbable that the average may have been somewhat higher than what is indicated by the limited returns in the Appendix." We must only console ourselves with the hopes held out to us that we know the worst, while the brighter prospect is withheld from us.

COMPARISON OF THE CROPS OF 1872 WITH THOSE OF FORMER YEARS.

The result of the returns as far as presented is not favorable as compared with former years. The average of grain per acre is reported lower in every particular than it was in 1869, and, with the single exception of spring wheat, lower than in 1871; though higher than in 1870, when the average was more than unusually low. See the following table:—

	1872	1871	1870	1869
	bush.	bush.	bush.	bush.
Fall wheat,	18	27½	15½	21½
Spring wheat,	19	17½	12	19½
Oats,	33	37½	29	39
Rye,	17	19½	12	18
Barley,	28	30	22	30½
Peas,	21	24½	19	22½

The comparatively low average of the fall wheat is thus partly accounted for in the report:—"The previous summer and fall having been in some sections of the country remarkably dry, a favorable seed bed could not be obtained; germination became slow and feeble, and the young plants in a great measure failed in so developing their roots as to give them a firm hold of the soil. This state of things was followed during the winter by high winds driving off the snow from exposed surfaces, that the plants completely perished, and the lands had to be ploughed and subjected to spring cropping. The past season has afforded additional and striking proof of the importance of shelter to winter wheat in this climate, for wherever the crops were protected by trees on the north and west, but very little injury was sustained." That the crops did not yield a greater average may be partly attributed to those causes is manifest; but might not much of this partial loss be traced also to other causes? Experience has long demonstrated that if the ground has been well prepared, in good tilth and fertility, an unpropitious season has less effect on the produce. Farmers, it is true, are rightly anxious for the fall rain "to put blood into the ground" for sowing their wheat, as we have often heard it expressed; but we claim, that one of the advantages of good farming is to make the farmer often less dependent on untoward circumstances. The man who, without due forethought, trusts to lucky chances, and does not prepare for probable adverse circumstances, cannot be a successful farmer. Thorough drainage where necessary; subsoiling if within reach; thorough, deep ploughing; a proper rota-

tion of crops; and good manuring, are great means to have a good seed bed, and to enable the root to take a firm hold of the soil, even in unpropitious seasons, and to prevent the risk of another ploughing and another seeding to secure one crop.

Again and again we have in the ADVOCATE pleaded for the preservation of our native trees, and the planting of trees in belts and clumps for shelter, as well as for the value of the timber. We hope the lessons taught by experience will have still greater weight than the words even of the Commissioner of Agriculture.

CROP RETURNS FROM ELECTORAL DIVISIONS.

Fall wheat—The highest average is reported from three electoral divisions, viz., Bruce, Dundas and South Grey—30 bush. to the acre. Four divisions give a return of 25 bush. per acre—Addington, East Middlesex, Northumberland and Oxford. Of North Middlesex the return is 23½; South Perth 22; Algoma and Co. Wellington return 20 each. From four divisions we have a return of 18; from one of 17; and from twelve of 15 bushels. Of five counties a return under 15 is given.

Of spring wheat the highest average yield does not exceed 25 bushels from any division, though the general average is higher than that of fall wheat.

Oats—Quality generally good. Average of the several divisions from 25 to 45.

Rye—Not much cultivated. The highest average returned 25 bushels. In some instances injured by the frost.

Barley—Generally not a heavy crop. The highest average was from S. Grey—50 bushel—good quality.

Corn—This is not looked on as a staple crop in Canada. The average yield is returned from one division as low as 20 bushels. The average yield most general is 40 bushels, while two divisions give a return of 45, one of 50, one of 60, one of 70, and one (W. Middlesex) of 80.

Root Crops—In the yield of root crops, in the several divisions, the difference is much greater than any other crop. A very great disparity in them was to be expected in this country, so much depends on the culture and other varying circumstances. Though there is in instances, some cause for discouragement in the growth of these most important crops, there is, on the whole, evident proof that the soil and climate of Canada are well suited to the growth of roots. The cultivation of them is yet in its beginning, and that beginning shows what may be done. Potatoes—In many places injured by the Colorado potato bug, and the crop inferior. In 13 sections the average is under 100 bushels per acre. From other places reports are favorable, the yield varying from 100 up to 300 bushels. Turnips—In some sections almost a failure. In many places averaging from 500 to 700 bushels. Mangold Wurtzel—Heavier crops than of turnips. Glengarry returns 1000 bushels to the acre. Carrots—About equal to the Mangold in produce.

FROM REPORT OF PROVINCIAL EXHIBITION FOR 1872.

"To glance very briefly at the details, the entries in nearly every one of the live stock classes, which are, perhaps, the most important to consider as an index of the progress and wealth of an agricultural country, either entirely surpassed those of any one previous year, or if in some one or two classes falling below some one previous year, exceeded the average of the four preceding years. The quality of the stock, also, was of a very high order, indicating a steady improvement, and showing that the enterprising breeders of Ontario are determined not lag behind in their efforts to reach the highest point of excellence attainable in this very important branch of agriculture. In the classes of draught horses especially, Durham cattle, long-wooled sheep, and the small breeds of swine, classes of prime importance, the classes were such as could hardly be surpassed in any country, and was considered by many competent judges to be superior to that on any previous occasion in this

Province. Indeed, the constant accession of high priced, first-class stock imported into the country, through the enterprise and honorable rivalry of our leading breeders, must inevitably result in a very high standard in the choice animals brought forward at our Provincial Exhibitions.

NOTE.—In the FARMER'S ADVOCATE of July, and again of October, 1872, we showed that it would be an unjustifiable and unnecessary undertaking for the Ontario Government to become importers of farm stock, as the work they were about to do was sufficiently done by private enterprise. This extract from official authority still further confirms the ground we took:—"The enterprise and honorable rivalry of our leading breeders must inevitably result in a very high standard in choice animals brought forward at our Provincial Exhibitions—and this without government importation or competition.—Ass't Ed.

High Prices of Short Horns.

When we hear of the prices paid for Short-horns, we are led to enquire are they really worth the prices they bring, and is it at all likely that such prices will continue. At the great sales of the Earl of Dumore's herd, three heifers were sold for 3070 guineas—they were of that tribe known to stock men as the Oxford family. At another sale, a three-year old bull was sold for £1732 10s.; and bull calves, we are informed, are sold for 1000 to 1200 guineas. We have a report of the Short-horn sales in England in the year 1872, and, though we had ere now known somewhat of the prices given for fancy stock, we were surprised at the amounts of money changing hands within a year in live stock purchasers. From the Short-Horn circular published by John Thornton, Esq., London, we abridge the following summary of the year's sales. There were forty-four great sales of Short-Horn stock; at which there were sold one thousand nine hundred and twenty-two head, realizing £112,404 12s. The average price was £58 9s. 8d. The prices of some animals were remarkably high, as for instance, at the sale of the Earl Dumore's herd, the highest price was 1200 guineas; and at Messrs. Harward and Downing's sale there was a still higher price—1650 guineas. The previous sale season had been distinguished for the prices, but the prices realized in 1872 were even higher than those of 1871, bringing an average of about £2 10s. higher. In the circular referred to, these prices are said to be the result of personal enterprise, of increasing demand, and of that abundant wealth and prosperity which the country has been developing during the last few years.

Are these stock really worth the prices paid for them—first, to the purchasers—second, to the country? To purchasers, the payment of such large prices has been remunerative. They have paid high prices, but they have kept at a high standard the value of their herds, and at their sales, they in turn realize good prices, that amply remunerates them for their outlay. Thus the sale of the Earl of Dumore is an instance: fifty-four animals sold, brought the nice little sum of £13,118 14s. The purchasers and breeders of such stock can hardly be charged with wild speculation, when they receive such paying prices at their sales. And the great demand, and the high prices for superior farm stock has been the means of increasing the wealth of the nation, independent of the immediate profits to the stock-owners. High breeding necessitates high farming, with a greater demand for skilled labor, and an increase of the value of the products of the soil. All this is a direct profit to the country. And there is yet to be taken into consideration the greater intrinsic value of improved stock. A well-bred animal—beifer or steer—is, if properly treated, in better condition for the shambles, and of higher value at two and a half years old, than one of the old, unimproved stock would be at a year older. In this there is a saving of the feeding for one year, and a higher value, and consequently greater remuneration to the feeder. It is of the highest importance that the improved qualities and value of stock be maintained, and stock more improved; and this is most effectually accomplished by the use consecutively of the very best and most purely bred stock to be bred from. For this purpose very high prices must be paid. That this improvement of stock, and perpetuating

their good qualities, will not be confined to the herds of those great breeders, but will extend throughout the country, will naturally follow, and the improvement will become general and permanent. At the same time, there must be brought into general practice, a more improved system of agriculture. Good stock require good feeding.

SALES OF SHORT-HORNS IN UNITED STATES.—In the United States there is evinced desire to follow the example of England in breeding and purchasing the best live stock to be procured, regardless of expense. We have a report from the States of sales of 888 head, at an average of \$234.90, with a total amount of \$254,177—the highest price, \$6000, the next highest, \$3000.

CANADA.—The sales of our great breeders and importers have been 184 head; average, \$289.31 in gold (a higher average than that of the United States); the highest price, \$2,025, sold to Mr. Miller. Some of the U. States breeders have made purchases at the Canadian sales, and some Canadian stock has gone to add to the best herds of England. From England stock has been also in turn exported to United States and Canada. The enterprise of our breeders and importers here, in this new country—the Arctic Regions, as it has been called—is worthy all praise.—Ass. Ed.

WINTER IN MISSOURI.

"Do you think you are in a cold county, and sometimes wish you were further south? If so make sure to pitch your tent, whether real or imaginary, further south than this.

Where the mercury goes down to 32° below zero, it is by no means pleasant to one who has come one and a half degrees south to get into a warmer climate in winter. Six miles from here it was even down to 40° below.

Who will now undertake to tell what varieties of grapes are hardy? Here everything above the snow line is more or less injured except Hermann and Cynthians.

Native and Concord are considerably crippled in many places.

Such as the Harlemont, Cunningham, Rulander and the like, are dead to the ground.

One exception I know of, where sickness in the family prevented the tying up of the vines as well as keeping the ground clear of weeds. In this case the Herbemont vines ran on the ground, and when winter set in were covered with grass. This, together with the snow at the time of the coldest weather, was a protection, and we expect to have some Herbemonts. Last summer we had the thermometer indicate 106° in the shade; this winter, 40° below zero. Can any place on this earth beat that? Truly, as some one says, Missouri is the coldest and hottest State in the Union.

Peaches will be among the things to talk about (unseen) the coming season here.

Bluffton, Mo., March 1, 1873.—Com. to Iowa Homestead.

USE OF THE SUNFLOWER.

In the *Argentine Republic* the culture of this plant is strongly recommended, because the flowers are believed to be the best material for wax and honey; the petals of the flowers yield a valuable dye, the seeds give fifty per cent of oil—excellent for cooking and illuminating purposes, while they are also a superior food for poultry and for cows, increasing the flow of milk.

The bottom of the calyx may be used for food in the same way as the artichoke, which it closely resembles; the wood will yield one per cent of potash, while common hard wood only yields one-tenth as much; the leaves may be used as food for animals, or made into a good smoking tobacco; while the bark properly prepared, affords material for the manufacture of paper.

CLEANSE THE SKIN.

It is a curious fact illustrating the necessity of cleanliness, and of keeping the pores of the skin open, that if a coat of varnish or other substance impervious to moisture be applied to the exterior of the body, death will ensue in about six hours. The experiment was once tried on a child at Florence. On the occasion of Pope Leo Xth's accession to the Papal chair, it was desired to have a living figure to represent the Golden Age, and so a child was gilded all over with varnish and gold leaf. The child died in a few hours. If the fur of a rabbit or the skin of a pig be covered with a solution of India rubber in naphtha, the animal ceases to breathe in a couple of hours.