



A Beautiful Stretch of Country in York Co., Ont.

The Theory of Flushing Breeding Ewes.

Good shepherds and live stock men of mark have long recommended that breeding ewes be flushed in the autumn before mating with the ram. The great percentage of single lambs dropped throughout Ontario last spring is conclusive evidence that the practice of having the female in a gaining condition when they mate is based on experience and results. The pastures were dry over a large part of Ontario from mid-summer on, and the ewes were not so thrifty and well fleshed when the mating season came as they should have been. Reports on the lamb crop from all quarters of this province indicate a large percentage of single lambs, and sheepmen attribute such to the dryness of the season and the condition of the ewes last fall. One good single lamb is better than two weaklings, but a ewe that has been handled properly should raise a couple of normal lambs without difficulty. A good average for a flock is one and one-half lambs per ewe or a 150 per cent. increase; this is nothing exceptional and should result after the natural losses have been taken into consideration.

The theory of flushing ewes is that by turning them on a good field of rape or clover about the middle of September a thrifty and gaining condition is induced and more twin lambs result. If this green feed is not available some oats and bran will have a similar effect in conditioning the ewes and making a larger lamb crop possible. Flushing is simply stimulating the genital organs. Flushed ewes come in season earlier and the lambing period the following spring is usually of shorter duration.

Now is the time to prepare for some forage crop in the fall. A promising field of clover should be spared for September feeding or the ewes might be given access to a patch of rape which is now coming on. Failing such accommodation one-half pound of oats, or oats and bran, per day prior to and during the breeding season will be a good investment.

THE FARM.

The Farmer's Independence.

EDITOR "THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE":

My friend, have you heard of the town of Yawn,
On the banks of the river Slow
Where blooms the Wait-a-while flower fair
Where the Some-time-or-other scents the air
And the soft Go-easys grow?

It lies in the valley of What's-the-use
In the province of Let-er-slide,
That tired feeling is native there,
It's the home of the listless I-don't-care
Where the Put-it-offs abide.

I don't live in that town but I'll admit that it possesses attractions that, at present, strongly appeal to me, for I have been loading manure all day, a fact to which an aching back, and a very fine blister eloquently testify.

Now this manure business is not exactly a lady's job, nor is it one that our noble profiteers would engage in, but it is, at least, a very honorable and necessary affair, though I have never come across any reference to it in the soul-inspiring lines of the poets. Possibly if I were poetically inclined I might write a few lines myself, but I fear they would not be in accordance with that long-suffering, docile spirit a Christian is supposed to possess. I will say, however, that it does away with any yearning for early morning, dumb-bell exercise, and that it would be rather nice if the spirit of independence would slip along at times, and throttle that eternal conscience which impels a fellow to work when he doesn't want to. Speaking of conscience, I'll confess that once during the day I did assert myself, and ordered it to "Get thee behind me" for a few minutes while I watched a couple of pugnacious "roosters" settle a little affair

of honor, but then, under like circumstances, anybody would have done that.

For some time after the "rooster" episode I got along like a house on fire, until the sight of an automobile passing by on the road interrupted my progress. Of course, there was really no need of me ceasing operations, but then as a good law-abiding citizen it was my duty to see that the speed law was not being violated. Sad to relate, however, while I was doing my duty my thoughts inadvertently steered me into a head-on collision with the tenth commandment and, though there was no particular damage done, it set me to wondering at that queer streak in human nature that causes a man to be forever wanting something he hasn't got, but which his neighbor has. Not that said streak is unduly prominent in my case, but I sometimes have an uneasy feeling that things are not just as they should be in this old world, or why should I have to elevate enormous forkfuls of manure skyward all day while Mr. So-and-so of the town of Doolittle drove about in his "Little old Ford, buzzing here, buzzing there, like a blue bottle fly in a meat shop. Wasn't I a free man in a free country, and, as such, entitled to a large chunk of independence?

Thinking along this line, one thing leading to another, I finally arrived at the conclusion that it would be a grand thing to be a wild man; not a domestic one, whom you may see any time when he hits his thumb with a hammer, or the stove pipes won't fit together, but a real out-and-outer like one of those prehistoric old chaps who lived in a cave, and kept body and soul together by means of nuts, berries, edible roots and an occasional choice dinosaur cutlet. Boots he didn't need, nor socks; and the sight of a pair of trousers would probably have sent him into hysterics. Moreover, the question of providing adequate shelter for a family that wouldn't stay small, presented no great difficulty to him. It merely imposed upon him the necessity of rising before the sun some fine morning, and sauntering over to some dwelling-place he had previously settled on as possessing the necessary qualifications, where, with his little bit o' blackthorn poised at a suitable angle, he would wait till the owner thereof should, like a "ground hog," pop his head out to view the weather, when—whack, thump! That was all there was to it, and he would strut home to his wife, flourish his club to the tune of, "Git a move on you," and it was moving day.

Now, though there might have been some drawbacks to our prehistoric friend's manner of life, there is no doubt he could lay a fairly real claim to independence. He did not need a doctor to assure him that his victim was as dead as could be, nor did he need a lawyer to convince a stubborn-looking jury that there was not sufficient evidence on which they could decently condemn a man to cross life's boundary with a rope round his neck. He didn't have to listen to the clap-trap of scheming politicians. Banking institutions, insurance companies, armies, navies, were not in his line of business. He had nothing to lose but his life, and when he lost that he was past worrying about it.

I have heard it said that a farmer is the most independent man on earth, but, in the light of the foregoing illustration his independence looks as if it needs to undergo a process of renovation, and for the life of me I can't imagine where the idea started from, unless it sprouted in the days of the pioneer farmer who hewed himself a home in the forest and reared a lusty family without the aid of grapenuts, shredded wheat biscuits, postum, baby's own soap and tablets, dustbane, blue jay bunion plasters, Eaton's catalogue and other little conveniences.

Since those days, however, insatiate progress has been busy, and sad is the farmer's lot. Wherever he turns he's confronted with the word *Must*. Each morning, each evening, he must tune his vocal organs, and croon soft lullabys to a scrawny lot of cows that, at unexpected times, show their appreciation of his efforts to charm an extra pint of milk from them by giving him a fearful wallop in the eye with their respective fly-swatters. He also must scratch pig's backs to put them in that contented frame of mind which scientists assert is necessary to the profitable assimilation of the soothing mixtures he administers thrice daily. He must pay frequent visits to the poultry house, and lecture a bilious looking flock of hens on the sin of clucking when it's eggs they should be laying. He is the motive power that must propel cream separators, wheelbarrows,

lawn mowers and sometimes washing machines. He must rock cradles, and fill wood boxes, and otherwise play a meek second fiddle to a dearly-beloved who yields her dominion over him only at brief monthly intervals when the milk or cream check arrives.

It must not be thought, however, that the good man is deprived of all liberty; he enjoys a few privileges. His ancient right to grumble at the weather has, as yet never been questioned, and, to give him his due, he makes a good job of it; for he growls when it's sunshiny, growls when it's rainy, and when it's neither he gravely shakes his head and gives an extra grunt or two for luck. He also enjoys the right to conduct his farming operations according to the light of his own good, bad or indifferent ideas. He may, if it so pleases him, when one of his horses "cuts up on him" show it where it "Gets off at" by means of a barrel stave or handy piece of scantling. The same process serves when he lets a pail of milk slip from between his knees, and he blames the cow for it. To see him at his best, though, when he musters all his privileges into one grand exhibition of sound and action, be near when he is trying to persuade a few pigs for market to walk up a gangway into his wagon; but as you value life keep out of his way and on no account whatever offer advice.

Seriously speaking, it's a wonder our farmer is not of a more violent disposition than he is, considering the manifold vexations of the spirit he suffers, and the somewhat doubtful quality of his little privileges, but, as a rule, he manifests a spirit of fatalistic resignation to circumstances that would do credit to the most devout follower of Mahomet. Of course, he indulges in a little desultory grumbling and uses some flowery language at times, but he generally ends up with a sigh of "What's the use, let'er slide."

As an example of the kind of thing he bumps up against take when he, with dreary visions of to-be-paid rents, taxes, wages, promissory notes and other little bills, ventures out with wheat into the wide, wide world of big business where merry millers are waiting eagerly for him.

It used to be in the good old days, so I am creditably informed, that a farmer could take his wheat to the mill and have it ground for himself on the done-while-you-wait plan. For every five bushels the miller exacted a toll of one-half bushel, more or less. Probably it would incline to more, but no matter, the farmer got all the rest in the shape of flour, bran and shorts. He also enjoyed a holiday and a good healthful gossip. Now that is what I call a good, honest business-like deal, with no cards up anybody's sleeve.

The farmers and millers of to-day are still doing business with one another, only a little differently, with the difference going into the miller's capacious pocket. The miller says: "Bring on your wheat," and the farmer thinking of some voracious creditor he must satisfy, quits looking at his pet "wait-a-while," flower and says, "Guess I'll have to." And so there is an exchange of wheat for cash, which on the face of it is sound business. But the farmer at times needs flour, needs bran, needs shorts; of course, he can get them but he must pay cash for them. Well what, say you, can be better than that, business on a cash basis. But it so happens in this case that the cash is all on the miller's basis, the farmer has nothing to do with it; he accepts whatever price the miller sets on his wheat, and buys his flour, bran, shorts to the same tune; in short, he sells for what he can get, and pays his own expenses, and buys at a price that pays the other fellow's expenses, a most beautiful arrangement for the merry miller, who grins cheerfully as the dollars pile up in his profit pail.

I suppose, though, even when I have proved to my own satisfaction that a farmer is a dependent, there will be some contrary beggar who'll wink, significantly tap his forehead, and pityingly murmur, "His parents must have been crazy too." But, take no notice of him, for it's more than likely he's one of those enthusiastic back-to-the-landers whose soul has been fired by some real estate agent's glowing account of the independence of a man who owns five acres, a Jersey cow, ten hens and a bee. He would laugh scornfully if I were to advise him to take a walk by the banks of the river "Slow" where soft "Go-easys" grow, and stay there till his mind became adjusted to the fact that the only independent farmer on earth is the arm-chair one who smokes, and nods, and dreams in the town of "Yawn."

York Co., Ont.

R. WATERMAN.