

The Sheep Industry in Ontario.

To the Editor "Farmer's Advocate":

Sir,—During the past six months the public and press have apparently been taking stock of the live-stock industries common in our Province. The questions of profit and cost of labor have been studied as never before. The latter consideration, always an important factor on the farm, is receiving more attention, and bulks larger and larger in the accounts as the years are passing by. Lines of industries, profitable with help available, have been abandoned, as often the assistance necessary could not be got at values and of the quality to furnish a living margin of profit. Hence, we see and hear and read of many carefully spying out the land, endeavoring to find relief, and something in the way of a change of operations which will lessen the burden and make life more enjoyable. To me it seems an open and a most inviting line of breeding, and work is right at hand in the business, which according to statistics and many reports has been neglected and in recent years discarded by hundreds throughout our land, and that is the sheep industry. No line of live-stock raising can be carried on successfully with so little labor; no kind of stock can be grown and matured at so low a cost; no kind of stock in Ontario has had so little attention given it in fitting for the market; and no other stock can, in my humble opinion, show as satisfactory a balance sheet at the end of the year, nor is there another kind of animal we raise to which we are so deeply and so universally indebted for comforts and luxuries as the gentle, innocent sheep.

Many and various are the reasons offered why sheep are decreasing in numbers. Dogs are one bugbear, but what of rats and weasels, skunks and foxes, and scores of mites and diseases to which poultry are subject, and yet do we hear of that blocking the almost marvellous growth of our chicken industry.

Fencing is another bugaboo. What nonsense, when of all our domestic animals sheep are the easiest to house and to keep under control in field or in winter quarters. Just notice the slipshod treatment given the lamb crop year after year on the majority of farms, if we want to learn where the fault lies. Lambs with long tails, uncastrated, run to market full of burs, and at a time of year when prices are at the lowest notch, just the same as was formerly done with the hogs.

Were lambs given such care and attention as the bacon hog gets of late years, and a similar preparation for the ever-ready market, no longer would paltry excuses lead to the neglecting of the sheep business. Nowhere in the wide world are diseases and other serious troubles among sheep so little known as in our Province. Had we half the ills to contend with that the British shepherds have, there would be some sense in the abandonment of a very profitable line on the farm. And over the sea do we find the sheep-raisers drop out, because of the serious difficulties, unknown to us, they meet with, and also all those which trouble us, such as dogs and fencing, etc.? Not by any means. They do not so readily follow a bad example, falling in line with a cry of this or that, which, by being repeated over and over and printed here and there, has in a manner become fashionable, and the evil shadow, which has so little to harm or hinder us, becomes thereby to the unthinking a terrible bugbear.

For many years back I have heard comparisons made as to the cost and probable profits in fattening lambs and cattle, the difference of a dollar per 100 pounds in cost of added weights being always in favor of lambs; and leading markets the past ten years have paid an average price of not less than a dollar per hundred live weight more for lambs than good quality cattle. Last week a letter from New York State mentions lambs selling in Buffalo at \$6.70, with best cattle two cents less, and such is not at all uncommon.

Having had some experience for many years in growing and feeding both kinds, and recently having been called on to talk along these lines, I investigated carefully the results obtained by others and myself. The outcome of my calculations have been so far beyond the opinions held, that if correct, it would not seem right to keep them hidden. If, on the other hand, my reckoning is astray, it is my wish that it should be corrected. In order to make the comparisons as clear as possible, the cost of adding 300 pounds to the bullock, and a similar amount to the required number of lambs, in given times, are compared, and the profits on each as well.

FATTENING A BULLOCK FOR SIX MONTHS.
Bullock 1,000 pounds, cost 3½c., live weight.....\$35.00
Fed 1 lb. clover hay daily=180 bu. at 6c. per bu. 10.80
Fed no hay the first month.
Fed 6 pounds of meal daily 2nd and 3rd months.
\$3.60; 1 lb. meal daily 4th to 6th months, \$9.00..... 12.60
Fed 1,500 pounds..... \$1.50 per ton..... 4.50
Total cost.....\$62.90

Sold at 5c., live weight, weighing 1,300.....\$65.00
Showing a profit of..... 2.10

FATTENING ONE HUNDRED LAMBS FOR FIVE MONTHS.

100 lambs at 75 lbs. each, bought at 4c.....\$300.00
Fed on rape and grass for a month at cost of... 31.00
Fed 120 days indoors, as follows:
5 lbs. turnips each daily, 1,000 bu. at 6c..... 60.00
1 lb. clover hay each daily, 6 tons at \$6.00... 36.00
1 lb. unthreshed peas each daily, 200 bu. at 60c. 120.00

Total.....\$550.00

Sold at 5½c. per lb., live weight, averaging 120 lbs. each=12,000 lbs.\$660.00
Showing a profit of..... 110.00
Or an average of..... 1.10

COMPARISON OF COST, GAIN AND PROFITS.

1 steer during 6 months eats \$27.90 worth, to make 300 pounds gain, or \$9.30 per 100 pounds.
6 2-3 lambs during 5 months eat \$16.67 worth, to make 300 pounds gain, or \$5.56 per 100 pounds.
1 steer costs daily 15½c., making a gain of 1 2-3 lbs.
6 2-3 lambs cost daily 14c., making a gain of 2 lbs.
1 steer gives \$2.10 profit in 6 months=to 12 per cent. per annum on \$32 invested.
6 2-3 lambs give \$7.33 profit in 5 months=to 88 per cent. per annum on \$20 invested.

In the above calculations, objection may be taken to having the lambs on the fields for a month, while steers were housed when purchased. It would make a difference of 16 cents less profit on each lamb, supposing the gain to be equal out and inside, but that is not probable, as the grain and root feeding does result in faster fleshing than field feeding alone.

If my deductions are correct, they will justify my claiming that in the meat-making business the lamb used as the machine is, and has been for the past ten years, the most profitable line of meat production on the Ontario farm. If my estimates and conclusions are wrong, I invite a threshing out of the facts, that we may learn a little more of the ins and outs of our labors. We are no longer grain-sellers. Animal husbandry is the only possible way at present in sight likely to provide us with the comforts we have a right to expect in tilling the land. But we must in the future give more thought as individuals to what is the proper course for us each one to follow, and not be misled by unwise and misleading statements, which, even if false, pass for currency by continuous repetition. Each year brings new problems for us to deal with. Progress is the prevailing watchword, and nowhere is it more required than in life on the farm, so as to keep abreast of the times.

JOHN CAMPBELL.

Beef Cattle from Dairy Cows.

Even in this day of advanced live-stock knowledge, we are frequently met with the question as to the possibility of producing young stock for beef from cows of the distinctively dairy breeds. In the dairy sections of the country, where the present scarcity of labor is most acutely felt, and people are turning about for some line of production involving less labor than dairying, some attempt is being made to raise young stock for beef production, either the offspring of dairy cows and dairy or scrub bulls, or of dairy cows and beef bulls, which are brought in for the purpose of producing young stock fit for beef. Farmers' Institute lecturers in many parts of the country are asked the question, "What breed would you recommend me to use, to cross with my herd of dairy cows—Holstein, Ayrshire or Jersey—in order to produce a calf that can be profitably turned into beef?" That it is impossible to combine a distinctively dairy business, based on the use of dairy breeds, with the production of beef, seems to be a thing that has not yet dawned on a considerable portion of our people. As a consequence, numbers of ill-fed and ill-bred calves are raised, to be sold as stockers at two or three years old, which are a source of loss to everyone that has anything to do with them.

The distinctive dairy type and the distinctive beef type are too far apart to be successfully combined. The wedge-shaped, skinny dairy cow, belonging to breeds that have been bred for many years with the sole purpose of producing milk, cannot, in the nature of things, be the mother of the compact, square, fleshy animal which alone is profitable as a producer of beef. No matter what sort of a bull may be used, the offspring of such cows will show the narrow back, light quarter and high flank which are characteristic of the dairy breeds, but about 1 when they appear in a beef animal. No matter how well such calves were fed, they would never be really good beef animals, would never, in fact, be more than unprofitable culls. In the dairy districts, however, where cheesemaking is followed in the summer, it is impossible to feed the calves well, and the result is seen in the

miserable, ill-shapen, undersized young stock found in many dairy districts, ill-bred, ill-fed and unprofitable from start to finish.

It is not the intention here to make any comparison between dairying and beef-raising. Both have their place in our agriculture, and it is impossible to say which is the most profitable. Each of these industries has found some particular breeds which are best suited to its purposes, and the characteristics of the animal suited to the one industry are almost the direct opposite of those suited to the other. Under these circumstances, the folly of attempting to raise beef cattle from dairy cows at once becomes apparent. As a matter of fact, very few, if any, of the men who buy stockers care to touch any that show even a trace of the blood of the distinctively dairy breeds, and such animals are always disposed of at a disadvantage. We do not think it wise for those who are engaged in a dairy business, and who have herds of Ayrshires, Holsteins or Jerseys, to make any attempt to raise young stock for beef, or to purchase bulls of the beef breeds with the object of producing young stock that can be used for beef-production.

There is, however, such a thing as a dual-purpose cow, but she is found in only one breed—the Shorthorn. This breed has been developed along the two lines of beef and milk production, and the two strains have been largely intermixed. Hence, it is possible to get cows of this breed that will give fair returns in milk, and, at the same time, produce a good beef calf, and, as a matter of fact, the great majority of the best stockers are the offspring of such cows. These cows, however, do not, as a rule, give as large returns in milk as the distinctively dairy breeds, and the man who would raise cattle for beef must be content with a smaller return in milk.

In conclusion, we would strongly advise those who are engaged in the dairy business, and use the dairy breeds, to make no attempt to raise young cattle for beef. If, however, some should decide that it is necessary for them to raise beef cattle, owing perhaps to exceptional circumstances, they must discard altogether their dairy breeds, purchase a herd of grade Shorthorns, and be content with a somewhat smaller return in milk. D.

FARM.

Organizing a Beef Ring.

Could you give any information for the organizing of a beef ring?
R. J. M.
Wentworth Co., Ont.

It will be necessary to get at least sixteen, and preferably twenty, men willing to go into the ring. This may be done by announcing a meeting for that purpose by poster or otherwise. When the requisite members have been secured, some local butcher or other person who is competent to kill and dress an animal is secured to do this work. This person must also cut up the beef, and keep account of the amount each member receives. In most cases, the beef-ring builds a slaughter-house convenient to the butcher, and allows him a fee of two dollars for each animal slaughtered. Each member of the ring agrees to furnish a two-year-old beast, to dress four hundred pounds, and subject to inspection by two members of the ring appointed at the annual meeting of the ring for that purpose. The animal is delivered to the butcher by the owner, and is killed and dressed in the early hours of the morning. The disposition of the hide, heart, liver, etc., are details that can be arranged between the ring and its butcher. A cut illustrating the method of cutting up the carcass was given in our January 14th issue.

Age and Germination of Seeds.

According to Prof. Mumford, of the University of Missouri, who has been experimenting with the object of determining the vitality of seeds, those of beans, peas and carrots are good for two years; of lettuce, asparagus and radish, for three years; of cabbage and turnip for five years, and of beets, melons and squash for from six to eight years. Of course, seeds kept for so long a time should not be exposed to undue extremes of heat, drouth or dampness.

With wheat, barley, oats or corn the aim should be to sow seed of the previous year's growth rather than to sow older seed. The loss in the vitality of these grains after one year of age is often considerable. The stage of ripening at which the grain is harvested has also an important bearing on the vitality of seeds.

More Welcome Than Ever.

To the Editor "Farmer's Advocate":
Gentlemen, Please find postal note for \$1.50, to cover my subscription for the "Advocate" for the year 1904, as I cannot get on without its valuable hints, being more welcome than ever now since it comes weekly.
Welland Co., Ont. JAMES K. DILS.