

Theory of M. Thury.

To the Editor of THE CANADA FARMER.

SIR,—In the propagation of our domesticated animals, it would doubtless be very much to the advantage of breeders and farmers if they could control the union of the sexes so as to produce either male or female, as it might suit their wants or wishes. The theory of M. Thury, adverted to by you in No. 2, page 22, CANADA FARMER, would, if found correct, go far towards effecting so desirable an end. But I very much doubt (ingenious as the theory appears,) its being correct. Last year we had twelve cows that had calves; four of the cows were sent, as soon as they were found to be in season, to bulls that were stabled; the others were milch cows, and ran in the same pasture with the bull. In this case copulation would take place at the commencement of "oestrus," and in the former case, it took place at an earlier period in its development. The whole of the cows had bull calves. The theory of M. Thury, and the above facts, are too much at variance with each other to be reconciled by

Yours truly,

M.

York, March, 1864.

NOTE BY ED. G. F.—We publish in another column a fuller account of M. Thury's theory. The subject is one of great interest to stock raisers, and we shall be glad to receive the testimony of all who have carefully noted facts that bear upon it.

Pork Packing in Canada.

To the Editor of THE CANADA FARMER:

SIR,—This business has recently occasioned a little discussion in connection with the late prohibition of live hogs into Canada on the part of the United States.

Some are of opinion this restriction was put in force in consequence of the enterprise of a few individuals engaged in this business in Hamilton, and who had been getting a large portion of their live hogs from the States for want of sufficient supply nearer home. That could hardly have been the cause, for at present the trade is almost too insignificant to attract jealous notice, besides it is only fair to give our neighbours credit for more commercial liberality. But that pork packing is destined to grow and flourish, prohibition or no prohibition, and that it will ultimately become a great and important interest in the Province, I have not the slightest doubt. There needs no great sagacity to foresee this—the thing is quite plain.

Canada offers to the packer for English account greater advantages than can be found elsewhere in America. Canada pea-fed pork is admitted to be the very best on this continent, and with a little more attention in breeding and feeding, it will rival that of Ireland. It is true that just now the supply is far short of the demand, but that will soon increase with good encouragement to the farmers to feed hogs. Salt can be bought at Montreal for a trifle over the amount charged by the United States for tax on that article, to say nothing of the first cost. Labour is readily obtained, and cooperage and packages of all kinds, and of very good quality, can be had at moderate prices.

To meet the present requirements of the English market, bacon must be of mild cure and new, and arrive there through all the months of summer the same as in winter. For summer curing we have that which is indispensable, fine cheap ice in abundance, and the cool northern outlet by the St. Lawrence is no small advantage to the perishable products of the hog. Farmers will do well to take care of their young pigs and keep this matter in view.

SAMUEL NASH

Hamilton, 9th March, 1864.

MORE DURHAM BEEF.—Mr. Robert Milne of Lockport, Will Co., Ill., brought six head of cattle to this city last week, which weighed in the aggregate 9,840 pounds, or an average of 1,640 pounds. He sold them to Mr. Hazlewood at 7½c per pound gross weight. They go to supply the Philadelphia market. The majority of these fine animals were thorough bred Durhams, though one or two were grades. Mr. M. says he would as soon have the latter as the former for beef making purposes.—*Prairie Farmer*

Sheep Husbandry.

Heavy Leicester Fleeces.

THE *Mark Lane Express* mentions that some attention appears to be given, and with success, to Leicester sheep in South Australia, and cites, in support of the statement, an account given in late Adelaide papers of the weight of some fleeces shorn from the flock of Mr. James Rankine, in September last. Part of the account we subjoin:—

No. 1. Leicester ewe, seven years old; has produced nine lambs within the last three years. Weight of fleece, 9½ lbs.

No. 2. Leicester ewe, six years old; has been well kept. Weight of fleece, 14½ lbs.

No. 3. Leicester ram, about same age as No. 2. Ran with the ewes six months of past year, and during that time was badly kept. Weight of fleece, 13½ lbs.

No. 4. Leicester ram. Ran four months with the ewes; not well kept; 14 months old. Weight of fleece, 11½ lbs.

No. 5. Leicester ram. Same age as last, and treated in same manner. Weight of fleece, 12½ lbs.

No. 6. Leicester ram. Same age as last, but well kept. Weight of fleece, 17 lbs.

No. 7. Leicester ewe. Same age as above; well kept. Weight of wool, 15½ lbs.

Buckwheat Straw and Sheep.

To the Editor of THE CANADA FARMER.

SIR,—On reading the article in your second number with the heading "Buckwheat unfit for Sheep," the thought struck me that "Mr. Peck" may have been mistaken, and that he drew wrong conclusions as to the cause of the disease, and death of so many of his sheep, and I could not easily divest myself of the idea that he blames the straw when he himself is to blame. It seems never to have occurred to him that dry straw of itself was insufficient to keep sheep in health, and it does not appear from his statement that they had anything else until more than half his flock were dead. Then it was he consulted some works and periodicals on the subject, "but could find no light thrown on the matter." Now, Sir, I think Mr. Peck could have received light from those works had he looked at them through another medium. They would at least have told him that "prevention was better than cure," that to keep sheep in a healthy state they must have something more than dry buckwheat straw to subsist on: that he ought to have given his "salt and sulphur" to them once a week during the winter; that his sheep should have free access to water; that a few of his "turnips and carrots" given once or twice a day would have been good for digestion, and that one dollar's worth of mixed peas and buckwheat to each sheep, given to them (a little daily) during winter would have "increased the weight of their wool two pounds each, besides adding a dollar's worth of meat each to their carcasses." John Johnson, the great apostle of American farming, says, that "one pound of buckwheat per day given to sheep, with straw will keep them thriving, provided they have water." I have grown buckwheat pretty largely of late years, and have thrown the straw to all sorts of stock. I have yet to learn that it was injurious to them, but they got a few roots and a little of the grain daily, and occasionally a feed of hay. I could enlarge on this subject but the above must suffice for the present.

I am, Sir, yours respectfully,

York, Feb. 27, 1864.

D.

How to have Twin-Lambs.

To the Editor of THE CANADA FARMER.

SIR,—In an article on sheep in No. 4 of THE CANADA FARMER, we are informed that to get twin-lambs the best way is to flush the ewes before the rams are put with them, but allow me to say that I do not quite agree with this method. I have but lately come from England, and out of Mid Kent, where a great deal of pride is taken in raising lambs, and I never knew any way to answer better than the following plan, viz.: always to save twin ewe lambs and twin rams. I knew a farmer well that always did this, and out of 150 ewes, for four or five years running he never had less than 110 that had twins. I believe that if the ewes are twin ewes, it does not matter much about the rams. I have also observed that where there is a ewe that has three lambs, should there be a ewe lamb among them, that three years out of five she will have three lambs.

A LOVER OF SHEEP.

March 3rd, 1864.

More of the Evil Effects of Buckwheat.

To the Editor of THE CANADA FARMER.

SIR,—In your second issue I notice a valuable communication from Mr. Peck, of Prince Edward's Co., on the bad effects of feeding buckwheat straw to sheep, and with your consent, will add some further remarks. A few summers since a neighbour of ours grew some eight acres of buckwheat for the purpose of ploughing in green as a manure. When the field was in bloom, being situated by the road side, he threw open the fence to the different kinds of stock that might happen to enter the field; his object being to have the buckwheat trodden down to facilitate ploughing it under. We had a large flock of sheep at the time on the common, and of course they shared the luxury. In the course of four or five days, on the sheep coming home one evening, we noticed something wrong with them—they acted much as Mr. Peck describes, standing separately, with heads down and ears drooping, and scarcely noticing any one calling them. On examination, we found a breaking out about the ears and neck; and attributing the malady to eating the buckwheat, we immediately enclosed them in good pasture, when they soon recovered. There were also some ewes that partook too freely, and were similarly affected; and I have been told by reliable men that they have known hogs to be killed by eating too much of the green crop. The grain, also, I believe not to be without its bad effect, although some farmers think much of it for feeding purposes. I have found that those families in which it is used as "the staff of life," towards spring, when the warm weather sets in, will care but little for the buckwheat cakes, and will generally have a breaking out, more or less, over the whole body, accompanied with a disagreeable itching, which is evidently the effect of the kind of diet used.

If we look at buckwheat in its botanical relations to the other grains, we find it is not very closely allied to them, as it belongs to a different tribe of plants entirely, viz., *Polygonaceæ*, the same order to which rhubarb and sorrels belong; whilst the other grains all belong to the grass or to the leguminous tribes of plants. Now, to the order of *Polygonaceæ* belong several plants that are of a decidedly poisonous character, and it is worthy of remark, that there is a possibility that buckwheat may contain some of the same qualities, as plants so closely allied generally possess the same characteristics. These facts suggest the question, viz.: Ought buckwheat to be grown as a field crop? This plant, which is a native of Asia, was at one time cultivated to a certain extent in Great Britain, but has gradually fallen into disrepute; and there is, I think, no doubt but that it is too highly valued in Canada, except perhaps as a green manure.

JOSEPH J. G. FERRILL.

Wooler P. O., Co. Northumberland.

Buckwheat and Meal for Sheep.

To the Editor of THE CANADA FARMER.

SIR,—Having noticed in the second number of your valuable paper a communication headed, "Buckwheat unfit for sheep," over the signature of Jas. F. Peck, and as you kindly permit the discussion of such topics through your journal, I beg leave to offer a few suggestions. We began yarding our sheep about the 20th November, they being at that time in good condition. Since that time they have had free access to buckwheat straw and chaff, but I find they prefer corn stalks, pea straw, or oat straw, to it. I have never known them to eat it unless they were without other food. I have also used buckwheat, whole and ground, and find that they improve very readily on it. Mr. S. Herrington, a farmer residing in Ameliasburgh, says he has used buckwheat for feeding his sheep without any injury to them. In the *Genesee Farmer* for November, 1863, there is a communication on wintering sheep, from John Johnson, who may be considered good authority on this subject. He says:—"There is nothing better for fattening sheep than buckwheat. One or one and a-half pounds to each sheep per day makes fine sheep."

There is also in the same number an article on fattening cattle and sheep in winter, in which the same writer says:—"Ground buckwheat is ordinarily the cheapest feed for sheep and cattle." I do not think Mr. Peck treats the subject fairly, as he says nothing about feeding buckwheat meal—only the straw and chaff. Now in this place buckwheat straw is considered very poor food, and is seldom used, unless feed is extremely scarce.

A FARMER.

Conecon, February 18th, 1864.