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STOCK

Why Not More Sheep?

Before the days of the American tariff on sheep and wool a flourishing business was done with sheep through the greater part of Eastern Canada. The breeder of pure-breds is still in the business, duties not interfering with his export trade; but on the farms of the mutton-producer, even the old sheep shed has disappeared; farmers themselves have forgotten the flavor of mutton chops, or leg of lamb, else surely there could be found a small flock somewhere on the farms; and the children have to adopt a pig for pet, and wear factory-knit stockings and mittens. It was not always so.

It is not well that the sheep have gone from so many of our farms. They are splendid gleaners; at least eighty per cent. of the weeds in a pasture will be eradicated by sheep, very few weeds seeds, if any, escaping destruction. They get much in a pasture that all other stock refuse. In winter, they are splendid consumers of coarse roughages, as pea straw, and barley and oat straw. They do not demand painstaking care, save at yearning time. Thus, they are a sort of inexpensive accessory, gathering up the loose waste ends, and converting them into a cash surplus.

The dispersion of farm flocks all over older Canada has an economic reason. Other reasons are frequently given, but they are inadequate. The cur dog is a nuisance; sheep surely will go through poorly-built wire fences, if large flocks are maintained on small pastures; other stock prefer not to graze after sheep; but these reasons are insufficient. If sheep were paying relatively, as they did formerly, they would not have been thus abandoned. When sheep were in their zenith, dairying had scarcely appeared above the horizon, beefmaking had so frequently and irregularly partial or total eclipse, that many men felt they could not rely upon it as their guiding star, and pork-production oscillated then as now. Now dairying and beefmaking are considered more reliably profitable; pork production also returns bigger profits and the trade is more stable. But no such improvement can be noted in mutton production. The business stands too much where it did in the long ago. Lambs dropped in the spring are retained all summer and sold in the fall or early winter, when they are not especially desired. There is not a sufficient profit in the business, handled after this fashion, to continue its prosecution. This is the quasi economic reason of the decline in popularity of sheep in Canada.

But there is money, more money, in sheep and lambs than ever before, if the methods of procedure were adapted to the present demands. What is wanted particularly is lamb, not mutton. The market wants Christmas lamb, Easter lamb, spring lamb, early summer lamb. This trade is almost as easily met, and is highly profitable. The producer must plan his crop for the market he wishes to suit. If for Christmas and the post-Christmas trade they must be fall lambs; for Easter, they must be January lambs, and so on. What misses for January will sell later on almost as good a market. But always the lambs

must be forced, and brought to market at from two to three months. At two months, the lambs can be brought to about forty pounds, and at three months sixty-five; the latter weight is getting rather heavy. For these fancy markets, the lambs at from two to three months will bring from seven and a half to ten dollars. A spring lamb, kept all summer, and marketed in the fall at 90 to 100 pounds, for five or six cents a pound, will bring no more.

It is true here, as elsewhere, that the wool produced by most sheep will pay for their keep. They are worth much as gleaners; they are worth much as a source of wool and meat sup-

not the price paid for the sow, but what she can do, that determines her value as an investment. A good sow should be retained as long as she does good work. The selection and development of a good breeding herd is a matter of time. With due attention to the points named, the hog-raiser will eventually find himself the possessor of sows that are reliable as prolific producers of high-class stock.—PROF. D. A. GAUMNITZ.

* * *

The boar of eight months or older will do better if kept by himself. He should be kept in a comfortable pen, with a lot of pasture adjoining, and supplied with a variety of nutritious food, which means something more than dry corn with an occasional drink of diluted dish-water. The permanent quarters should be provided with a view to furnish sunlight, exercise, dry warmth and cleanliness. These should be so located that the sows may be conveniently brought to him for service.

* * *

Rommel has compiled from records of the Poland-China and Duroc-Jersey Associations a fund of figures showing the fecundity of such a great number of sows of these breeds as to make their summing up thoroughly representative. Observations of 14,703 Poland-China litters in the five years, 1882-86 inclusive, disclosed an average of 7.04 pigs per litter. Observations of 39,812 litters of the same breed in the years 1898-1902 showed an average of 7.52 pigs. This was an increase in the latter five years of .48, or nearly one half pig per litter, a percentage of 6.81. From 1893 to 1897 inclusive, 3,762 Duroc-Jersey sows averaged 9.22 pigs each. From 1898 to 1902 inclusive, 17,890 Duroc-Jersey sows averaged 9.27 pigs each, or an increase of .054 per cent. Of the more than 76,000 sows of both breeds as under observation one Poland-China reported 20 pigs, and two Duroc-Jerseys a like number.



TYPE OF POLAND CHINA EXHIBITED BY F. H. WIENEKE
This photograph shows the smooth plump shoulders and back of his champion sow. She is 23 months old and carries her third litter

ply to farms; they are a delight to have about the farm-home, and they will pay, and pay well to those men who will adapt them to the market demands.

The Brood Sow

The sow chosen for breeding should be selected from the best animals in the best available herd in the farmer's neighborhood. The first of all considerations is that she should be of the best type for meat; thick, wide and growthy. If she is the progeny of a mother known to be prolific, with a litter of eight at a time, regular in her "coming in" season, a good nurse and a good mother, it is altogether probable that she has inherited these qualities. An active rather than a sluggish animal is to be desired, since the pasture is to furnish a large portion of her food. It is

FARM

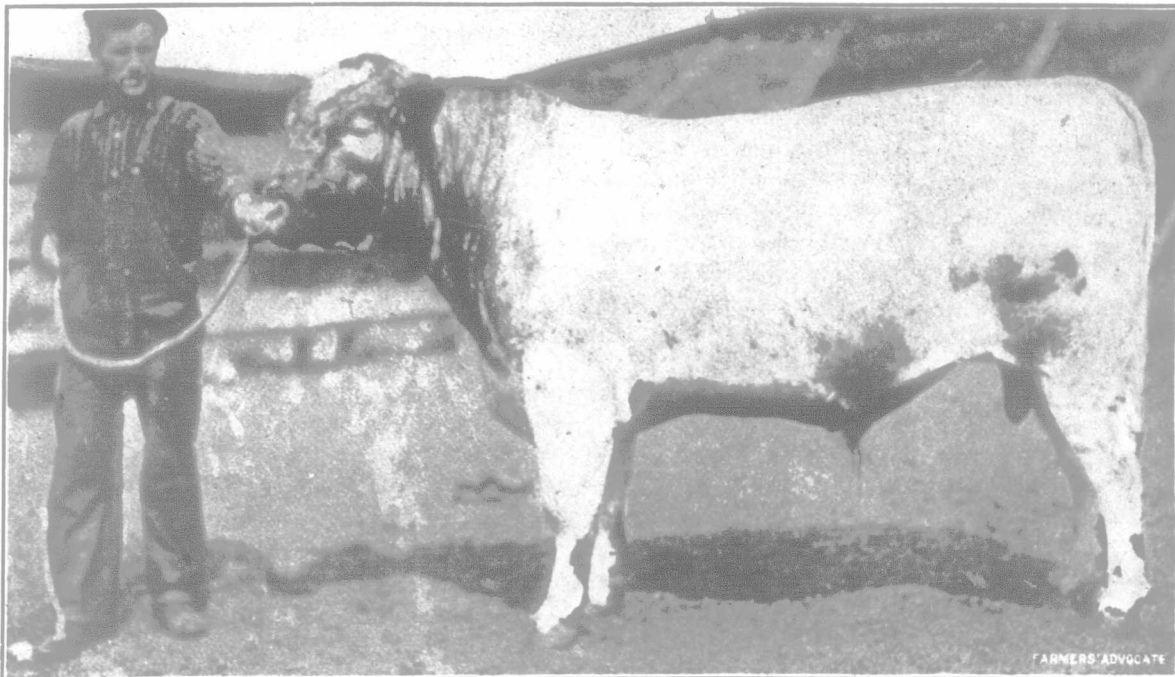
Topics for Discussion

In recognition of the fact that valuable hints always are obtained from men engaged in actual farm work THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE has adopted the "Topics for Discussion" column, in order that our readers may see an open channel through which they may inform their brother farmers as to practices that are worth adopting and warn them against methods that prove unprofitable.

Not only do we wish our readers to discuss the topics announced for the various issues, but also we desire that they suggest practical subjects on which it would be well to have discussion.

This notice appears under the "Farm" department, but the questions dealt with cover all branches of the farming industry. Letters should not exceed 600 words and should reach this office 10 days previous to the date of issue. They are read carefully and a first prize of \$3.00 and a second prize of \$2.00 awarded each week. Other letters used will be paid for a regular rates to contributors.

September 7—Give suggestions on exhibiting filed



JUNIOR CHAMPION SHORTHORN BULL AT WINNIPEG AND BRANDON
This Stock Bull, Boquhan Hero, owned by Sir Wm. C. Van Horne, was a popular winner