

How Some Successful Shepherds Handle Their Flocks During the Fall.

It is but material that every shepherd should aim at raising as large a percentage as possible of strong, thrifty lambs. Some appear to be more successful with their lamb crop than others, and the reason for this may oftentimes be traced to the fall management of the flock. Prior to the breeding season it is considered essential by prominent and successful shepherds, that the ewes be in a gaining condition at the time they are bred. Their experience has taught them that it pays to give the breeding flock special attention during the fall. The lambs should be weaned in time to give the ewes a chance to gain in flesh. Too many sheep-owners allow the flock to practically take care of itself and as a result of such practice the returns are not what they should be. The following paragraphs give an outline of the methods of handling the flock during the breeding season as practiced by well-known sheep breeders. Those starting in the business might advantageously take a leaf out of these men's book of experience and thus probably gain for themselves considerable greater remuneration from their flock than if they learned the business from their own experience only. The methods of handling the flock differ, somewhat with different breeders, but practically all claim that for a big increase in the spring the shepherd must properly look after his flock the previous fall. A thin, half-starved ewe at time of breeding is not likely to produce and raise a pair of twin lambs the following spring.

Favors Breeding While the Ewes are on Grass.

BY A. A. MACMILLAN.

Much depends on the management and care of breeding ewes previous to and during the breeding season. The lambs should be weaned during September or early October. There is usually some good aftermath, either timothy or clover, upon which the lambs may be placed until finished for market. The ewes should be kept on short pasture until dried up. It is also wise to go over the flock several times and milk out any ewes that require it. As soon as the ewes are dry they should be culled over and any undesirables either sold or replaced with the lambs to fatten for later sale. Shearing ewes kept to replace vacancies should then be put with the breeding flock and all should be turned on to a good pasture for a month or six weeks previous to breeding. This gives the ewes a chance to gain up in flesh. About ten days to two weeks before turning in the ram the ewes should be given a small allowance of oats, say a quarter to a half pound daily. This brings the ewes in stronger in heat, increases the percentage of twins, and shortens the lambing period. It is important that ewes should be gaining in flesh during the breeding season to get the best results.

The ram should be purchased well in advance of the breeding season and should be fed sufficient grain to keep him in good heart. The grain allowance should be increased during the breeding season and large rams will require a pound to a pound and a half of grain daily. There is nothing better than oats and bran, or, in the absence of bran, oats alone. Many farmers with small flocks prefer to let the ram run with the ewes in the field. This method saves time, but unless the ram is a sure breeder often results in the loss of an entire lamb crop as the field method does not allow of any check on the ewes. The safest plan is to house the ram at night, bringing the ewes in every morning and marking each ewe as bred with water-color paint. Ewes that are not settled in lamb will return to the ram in fourteen to sixteen days, and may then be marked with another color of paint, or any other distinguishing mark that may be handy. If many of the ewes return the second time it is a pretty sure sign that the ram is not a sure breeder and arrangements should be made to secure the services of another ram. A ram two years and older will breed fifty to seventy-five ewes, if properly fed and allowed with the flock for one hour only night and morning each day. A yearling ram will breed forty to fifty ewes under the same method of handling, and a ram lamb fifteen to twenty-five ewes. Larger and stronger lambs are usually obtained from mature rams, and it is good practice to purchase a mature ram that is a tried breeder but is being offered for sale to eliminate inbreeding. Rams may be used as long as their teeth remain good and they keep in good flesh. Many rams may be kept for breeding purposes until eight and ten years of age, and in some cases even longer.

In the commercial flock, mating should begin from the first to the fifteenth of November. This will bring the lambs along the last of March and the first of April, which is about as convenient as possible for most farmers from the standpoint of labor, and at the same time the lambs are old enough when the ewes are turned to pasture to take all the milk without causing digestive trouble. Another point in favor of breeding early in November is that the ewes are still on grass, consequently are more likely to be gaining in flesh. The most unfavorable time for breeding is the first two weeks after the ewes are housed, as unless they are fed roots and a liberal allowance of grain they are sure to be failing in flesh, owing to the change from pasture to dry feed. There is good money in raising early lambs for the Easter or early summer trade but such practice requires more skillful management to obtain the best results.

Fall dipping is essential, even though the flock has been dipped in the spring, as, unless absolutely free from ticks, a few that may have escaped the spring dipping will have reproduced sufficiently to cause a great deal of annoyance before spring. If spring and fall dipping has been kept up for several years, and it is known that the flock is free from ticks, then the fall dipping may be dispensed with for one and possibly two

years, but generally speaking fall dipping should be practiced to safeguard the flock against skin diseases and parasites. Either liquid or powder dips are effective. With the small flock a large barrel or similar receptacle will take the place of a dipping tank. Each sheep should be immersed for two minutes and allowed to drain for the same length of time on a platform so arranged that the drip runs back into the tank.

Don't think because you have a small flock of ewes that you can afford to be careless in the handling of either the ram or the ewes. A small flock, well handled, is capable of yielding one hundred per cent. profit. The same flock carelessly handled may not yield fifty. Give sheep the same attention you give your horses or cows and watch results.

The Lamb Crop Depends on Condition of Ewes at Time of Breeding.

BY J. R. KELSEY.

This is the time of year when sheepmen should change the pastures of their flocks, and every effort should be made to have the ewes gaining in condition. Much depends upon this if a good lamb crop is desired

policy to wait until next spring before knowing whether or not the ram is a sire.

Many people advise dipping in the fall; this, of course, is all right, but with labor so scarce and various other things to consider in these trying times, we have of late only dipped once each year, and that about six weeks after shearing. We find if a good reliable dip is used that very few ticks put in an appearance until toward spring.

Another matter of great importance at this time of the year is to look after the burdocks. By now they are ripe and unless cut and drawn away they will simply ruin the sheep's appearance, and cause a big reduction in the price of next year's clip of wool, and when we consider the price and urgent need of this article we should not hesitate to use every means at our disposal to produce as good an article as possible.

Breed on Moderate Pasture.

BY D. E. MCEWEN.

To be a successful sheep breeder depends on one's ability to raise strong, healthy, vigorous lambs and to do this the breeding ewes must receive the proper care and attention. As soon as the lambs are weaned, the ewes should be placed on very sparse pasture to stop their milk flow. If they are in good condition, they may be left on this pasture for some time, but as a rule they



A Good Flock on Fair Pasture.

next spring. After doing this, it is wise to cull out all ewes with defective udders, or old, toothless animals, and good, young, healthy sheep put in their place.

Then we should consider our ram; if he has already been used two seasons, a new one should be secured to avoid inbreeding. There are many ways of securing a new ram, but the best way of all is to buy a tried sire from someone who has had good success. If this cannot be done a yearling can often be bought from some reliable breeder, or, if the ewe flock is small, even a lamb might do. As to the particular kind of a ram, our kind is and always has been one of only medium size if the ewe flock are good, large individuals. It is easily understood why we prefer a large ewe, as a small one cannot nourish her lambs or will not usually have as many, but we do not know ourselves why a medium sized ram will go on, year after year, siring better lambs and more of them than will a big ram of the upstanding type. Perhaps there are men who can explain the reason for this, but I am not one of them.

For a straight commercial flock the ram should be turned out with the ewes anytime between the first and twentieth of November; before that the ewes should have been separated from their last year's crop of lambs and thoroughly dried, and before mating all tag locks should be carefully trimmed off the ewes' tails.

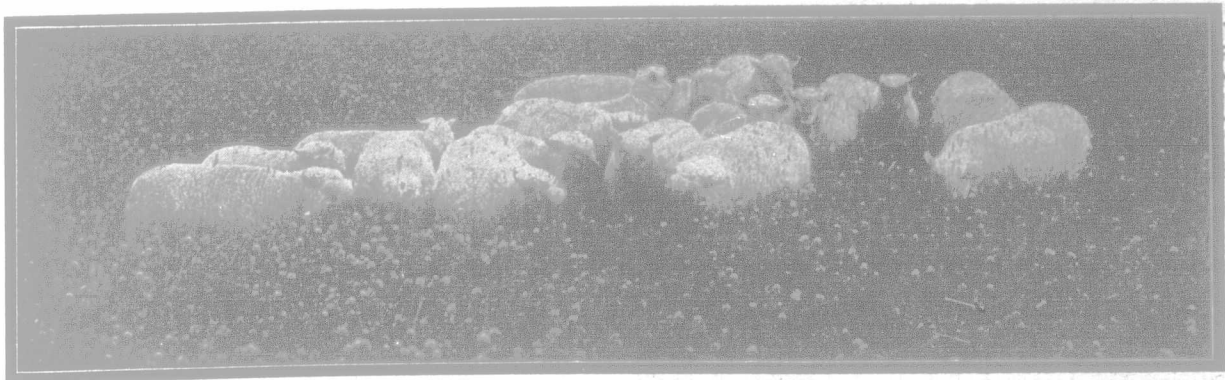
If the flock is under forty, and the ram a yearling or older, we would advise allowing all to run together, but if the flock numbers more than this, or the ram is young, then he should be fed a good feed of oats, pulped turnips, and bran, all by himself, or with an old ewe for company, once or twice each day as required. After he has been with the ewes two weeks he should have a good quantity of paint rubbed on his breast every morning. In this way it is an easy matter to see which ewes are returning and if many still appear after the fifth week, a new ram should be turned in, as it is poor

require good, strong grass and a "change" during the hot weather. When the ewes are about to be mated turn them on a fair pasture where the grass is not too abundant. This will give them a tendency to catch the first service and give the embryo lamb a start. After three weeks, if a ewe does not return she should be put on a strong, succulent pasture such as clover. This practice is called "flushing" and tends to give a larger percentage of strong lambs. At all times let them have access to plenty of pure water and salt.

The ram must also receive attention, particularly if he is to be mated to large number of ewes. If running on good pasture during the summer, he will not need grain feed to keep him strong and vigorous. Three weeks or a month before the breeding season it is good policy to feed him bran and oats once a day to build him up to strong flesh—but not to carry unnecessary fat. In a small flock the grain feed may not be necessary, but where there are forty or more ewes it is essential. While with the ewes he should receive grain twice a day or be confined inside, fed during the day and allowed with the flock at night. In this manner, he will handle more ewes without letting him down in flesh or vigor to any appreciable extent.

In very large flocks each ewe should be taken from the ram as mated, but this entails considerable time. To identify each ewe that has been bred, paint the ram on the breast between the front legs with some substance that will not dry or harden (red ocher and oil) and at the end of eighteen days or three weeks, change the color of the paint (lamp black and oil). Each ewe that returns will then be marked with a change of color. This also enables the breeder to estimate roughly when each ewe will lamb by the color of the paint. The period from conception to maternity for a ewe is one hundred and forty-seven days, or five months.

It is difficult to determine the number of ewes to



Flushing the Ewes on Good Pasture.