Chatty Stock Letter from the States.

(FROM OUR CHICAGO CORRESPONDENT.)

Extreme top prices now, compared with one and two years ago:—

CATTLE.	1895.	1894.	1893.
1500 lbs. up	$6 60	$4 50	$6 05
1350 @ 1500	6 30	4 40	6 00
1200 @ 1350	6 20	4 35	5 45
1050 @ 1200	6 15	3 90	5 00
900 @ 1050	5 80	3 70	4 85
Stillers	6 00	....	....
Feeders	4 70	3 65	4 60
Fat cows	5 75	3 40	4 30
Canners	2 00	2 40	2 55
Bulls	5 50	3 35	4 20
Calves	5 50	5 40	7 00
Texas steers	5 75	3 80	5 05
Texas C. & B	3 65	2 60	3 00
HOGS.			
Mixed	$5 25	$4 90	$7 20
Heavy	5 42½	4 95	7 37
Light	5 00	4 90	7 05
Pigs	4 75	4 80	6 90
SHEEP.			
Natives	$5 25	$5 30	$5 60
Western	4 95	5 25	5 80
Texas	4 35	4 50	5 25
Mexican	4 85	5 00	5 50
Lambs	6 00	5 75	6 70
May Corn	46⅜	38	41⅜
" Wheat	55⅜	64½	83
" Pork	12 07½	12 42½	16 65
" Lard	6 95	7 37½	10 10

The matter of the shortage in marketable live stock is really growing quite serious. Even in the case of hogs dealers are coming to the conclusion that the available supplies were greatly over-estimated. Thirty days ago the notion was quite general that hogs would be very plentiful, but now, with receipts at Chicago only about 100,000 per week, and other places in proportion, the situation looks different.

Stocks of hog products are fairly large, but exports are liberal, and hog meat is being used to take the place of beef to a large extent.

There have been slaughtered at the three important Western cattle cities, since January 1st, about 9½ per cent. (over 80,000) less cattle than for same period last year. The falling off in the receipts was greater than that, about 14 per cent., but the slaughtering did not fall off quite so much, because shipments were less.

A lot of 737-lb. heifers sold at $4.70; some 1,430-lb. Hereford steers, $6.25.

The Standard Cattle Co. marketed 38 head of 1,342-lb. cattle at $5.60, and 38 head, 1,492 lbs., at $5.85.

Ten carloads of 1,307-lb. Nevada hay-fed Hereford and Shorthorn cattle sold in Omaha at $5.30.

Distillery cattle, 883 to 1,263 lbs., sold at $5.35 to $6.00, with 1,450-lb. slop-fed bulls at $4.40 to $4.45.

Reported that Hathaway, the Boston exporter, has contracted 2,000 Canadian distillery cattle for May and June.

Hay-fed Montana feeding cattle, 976 to 1,162 lbs., $3.80 to $4.20.

R. W. Smith was here from Oklahoma City, Ok. He had in 21 head of good 1,450-lb. steers, which sold for $6.00, and 21, averaging 1,153 lbs., at $5.50.

Hamilton & Rice, of Mexico, Mo., sold a lot of 205 shorn sheep, averaging 125 lbs., at $4.70. A. B. Tidwell, of the same place, sold a load of shorn sheep, averaging 130 lbs., at $4.65.

A bunch of 469 clipped Western sheep, averaging 85 lbs., sold at $4.30.

Choice 146-lb. sheep sold to an exporter at $5 to $5.15.

Michigan lambs, 93 to 105 lbs., sold at $5.80 to $5.90.

A lot of 172 Montana feeding sheep, averaging 99 lbs., sold at $3.50.

While plug horses are unconscionably low, the really good grades are selling very well, as shown by the following list of top prices at a recent Dexter Park sale:

Pair of bay carrage horses, A. Poole, Chicago, $2,000; brown cob gelding, H. W. Marshall, La Fayette, Ind., $430; brown Hackney team, F. C. Austin, Chicago, $2,200; bay road horse, Mr. Laflin, Chicago, $450; bay coach team, Arnheim Live Stock Co., Pittsburg, Pa., $775; brown cob team, John Dupee, Chicago, $1,000; gray driver, E. A. Hill, Chicago, $255; bay road horse, record 2.26½, John Dupee, Chicago, $1,200; bay driver, D. T. Packer, Saginaw, Mich., $500; brown roadster, Hermann, the magician, $510; chestnut driver, Hermann, the magician, $475; brown carriage team, Hermann, the magician, $1,000; brown cob team, H. Koelig, Mexico City, Mexico, $650.

Best meal-fed Texas cattle sold at $5 75, which was the highest in over two years.

John P. Gillett's fancy Shorthorns, 1,588 lbs., sold at $6.60, the top of the season.

The Texas season is about a month late. In Southern Texas the cattle are doing well, and good grass beeves will be ready for market in five or six weeks. Cattlemen are feeling good, and instances where ranchmen or dealers who bought cattle last fall have taken, or could take, $25,000 to $50,000 profit, are numerous enough to remind one of the old boom times.

Description of Ayrshire Points.

[Paper read by Wm. Stewart, Jr., Menie, Ont., before the Dominion Ayrshire Breeders' Association.]

In judging cattle of any description, reference must always be had to breed characteristics. Thus, while all cattle are judged by certain undeviating standards, as respects feeding and assimilation, beef cattle must be judged from a beef-making standard, and dairy cattle from their milk-producing powers, it is more than probable that, weight for weight, the Ayrshire cow, being of medium size, will produce more milk than any other breed. In selection, no surer test can be had than a careful study of her points.

Usefulness.—The usefulness of the dairy cow is in her udder, and toward the udder, its shape and its yield, all the capabilities of the cow should be directed. We must first view it as a reservoir for the milk. As such, it must be large and capacious, with broad foundation, extending well behind and forward, with distinct detachments, broad and square, viewed from behind the sole broad and level, the lobes even sized, the teats evenly distributed, the whole udder firmly attached, with skin loose and elastic. Such a form gives great space for the secreted milk and for the lodgment of the glands while allowing the changes from an empty to a full vessel. The glands should be free from lumps of fat and muscle, well set up in the body when the cow is dry, and loosly covered with a soft and elastic skin, without trace of flabbiness. Such a covering allows for extension when the animal is in milk, while the glands are kept in proximity with blood vessels that supply them; the necessities of the lacteal glands are larger supplies of blood from which milk can be secreted, and this harmonizes with the demands of the udder, as a storehouse; for broad attachments mean broad belly or abundance of space for the digestive organs, from which all nutriment must originate. The blood is furnished to the glands of the udder by large and numerous arteries, as secretion is dependent on the freedom of supply of blood to the part and a copious flow. We find branches coming from different arterial trunks and freely anastomosing with each other, although these arteries are internal and out of sight. Yet, fortunately, the veins which carry the blood from the udder pass along the surface and, from their size and other characteristics, indicate the quantity of blood, not only which they carry away, but which must have passed through the glands from the arteries. These return veins pass both backward and forward; those passing forward are known as the milk veins, and the size of these superficial veins, on either side of the belly, and the size of the orifices into which they disappear are excellent points to determine the milking probability of the cow; still better is it to find, in addition, veins in the perineum which also return from the udder prominent and circuitous.

Escutcheon.—The escutcheon is now generally conceded to be a good indication of milk in the cow; this mark is sufficiently well known not to require description in detail. I think a broad escutcheon is fully as good a sign as a long one, that quantity or quality meaning more than shape, yet I would not discard the shape entirely. One error must, however, be avoided: it may be well to compare the size of escutcheon of cows of one breed, but never to compare the size of escutcheon of cows of different breeds. I think this point means more relative to size in the Ayrshire than in the Holstein, and am certain that, while it may be safe to follow it in the Ayrshire, in the majority of instances it would be equally unsafe to adopt it in selecting a Shorthorn, for the obvious reason that that breed has been bred for generations for other purposes than those of the dairy. The udder and its dependencies, the milk veins and the escutcheon, may be considered the foundation of the Ayrshire cow. These influence profit, and also the shape of the body and the form of the animal. The milk vessel is placed in the pubic region of the cow, and is protected on either side by the hind limbs. The breadth of its attachment secures breadth of body, and the weight requires also a depth of quarter and of flanks. The breadth below requires breadth of hip above and length of loin here appears related to length of pelvis.

The physical function of milk-producing demands a great and continuous flow of blood, so to speak; this flow is dependent on the supply of food and the facilities of digestion. To gain this a large body is required, in order to hold the suitable digestive organs; to gain further room for these we desire to see arched ribs, depth, yet no heaviness of flank, and breadth of hips, which we see was also required for the broad udder; to sustain this body, a strong, firm back is needed to gain the most of the blood after it has absorbed the chyle from the digestive organs. Reason shows that it should find its way freely and speedily through the system on its labors of supply and removal, cleanse itself in the lungs and again pass on to its duties; all this points to a healthy heart not cramped, and lungs of sufficient capacity, for the yield of milk drains much nutriment from the system, and the constitution must needs have the vigor given by a healthy and active heart and lungs. In this way the chest is correlated with the udder. The reproductive functions require back bones of good size, and a broad pelvis is desirable, as underlying within are the generative organs; defects here are to be shunned. Thus the necessities of the body of a good milking cow require the wedge shape, and this not only from the flanks, but also when viewed from above.

Encouraging a Wool Exhibit.

At the last meeting of the Dominion Sheep Breeders' Association, in order to encourage a display of fleece wool at the next Toronto Industrial Exhibition, Ald. John Hallam generously donated $75 (to which a like amount has been added) towards the premium list, which we are now advised has been arranged as follows:—

FLEECE WOOL—5 FLEECES, WASHED OR UNWASHED.

	Teg. 1st.	Teg. 2nd.	Ewe. 1st.	Ewe. 2nd.
Coarse combing wools, Cotswold type	$8 00	$5 00	$8 00	$5 00
Medium combing wool, Lincoln or Leicester	8 00	5 00	8 00	5 00
Medium clothing, Shrop., Dorset, or Oxford types	8 00	5 00	8 00	5 00
Super clothing, Southdown type	8 00	5 00	8 00	5 00
Fine clothing, Merino or Grades	8 00	5 00	8 00	5 00

CLOTHING FLEECE AND CROSSES—20 FLEECES.

	1st.	2nd.	3rd.
White from Grade sheep	$10 00	$5 00	$3 00

The following conditions are attached:—"Teg to be first clip, from animals of either sex Ewe to be from ewes, and to be the second or subsequent clip. Prizes for fleece wools to be competed for by breeders or farmers only. Exhibitor to certify that he is the breeder of the sheep from which the wool was shorn; that they have since been in his possession, and giving details of breeding. Judges to specially note evenness of growth, uniformity, and quality of staple."

We presume it is to be understood from the above that exhibits of washed and unwashed wool will be judged together, which, it strikes us, should be avoided. We would also say that, in the judging, length of staple or weight of fleece should be considered. If we can get quality and quantity, it surely is desirable, at least from the breeders' or wool producers' standpoint. We certainly ought to get as far in that direction as practicable. Cotswold breeders will take exception to the word "coarse" as specially applied to the wool from their favorites, and various other breed groupings might be suggested as to points, upon which there will naturally be differences of opinion to some extent, based upon individual characteristics of sheep. Apart from this, it seems a very well-arranged list, and ought to bring out an attractive display of wool. "Merino" might have been omitted without serious loss.

Sheep Industry in Manitoba.

[Read by Donald Fraser, "Lake Louise," Emerson, before the Live Stock Breeders' Convention].

I have had an experience of fifteen years with sheep-raising in Scotland, and was engaged twenty-six years in Ontario in the same business, where I was my own purchaser, manager, shepherd, and showman, and have had an additional experience of nearly fourteen years in Manitoba. I think Manitoba is the best country for sheep I know of. They are always healthy and always in good condition, having no particular disease, nor any enemies, unless a stray wolf, and they are not bad in our section.

In 1881 we brought from Ontario to this country, Cotswold, Leicester, and Southdown sheep, and soon afterwards we added Shropshire to the list. They all run together, summer and winter, except in the breeding season, when each class is separated by themselves with their own kinds of rams; and I may say here that all these breeds have done equally well.

We feed the sheep at this season (winter) on the clean frozen ground, every morning and evening, with our beautiful fine prairie hay, and a sheaf of oats two or three times a week—say a sheaf for every six or seven sheep, leaving the sheaves tied—and a basket of turnips occasionally. We leave the sheep closed in their yard until the feed is ready, so as not to get chaff or any dirt on the back of the sheep, as it is extremely detrimental to the wool.

We have a nice dry house for the sheep to go in and out at will night and day, the door always open unless the weather is very cold and stormy. I would rather have the sheep a little too cold than too warm. They have access to plenty of water and salt, summer and winter. I find it a good way to shear all the shearlings, dry sheep and wedders just as soon as the weather is sufficiently warm, before the wool gets tagged and dirty with the sheep feeding on the grass; it is much better for the sheep, and more wool will be secured; shear the ewes two weeks later. I think it is better to have the lambs come in the latter part of April—the lambs require less attention and the ewes thrive better by being on the grass.

The ewes carry their young about twenty-one weeks. When I find a young lamb chilled through and through before he is able to get up and suck, I take him to the house at once, wrap him up in some sort of blanket, and immediately place him in the oven and leave him there until he gets thoroughly warmed, and in a short time he will be able to suck his mother. Many a valuable lamb I restored to life in this way when some men would throw them away for dead.

The lambs should be docked, and all the ram lambs should be castrated when about two or three weeks old—they will sell better to the butcher in the fall than if they were rams, or if the price is not satisfactory, they can be wintered in the flock without any trouble.

When the ewes are shorn the ticks will go on the lambs. To exterminate these obnoxious insects, solution of tobacco juice and softsoap, and a little turpentine, mixed well together, will kill the ticks and cleanse the skin. To test the strength of the solution, put a tick on the palm of the hand, drop a