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Trade increases the wealth and glory of a country; but its real strength and stamina are to be looked for among the cultivators of the land.—Lord Chatham

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Will We Finish Lambs for the Block?

Profits Secured on Experimental Farms—Some Notes on Feeds and Feeding—E. S. Archibald, Dominion Animal Husbandman

NO BRANCH of farming offers better inducements than that of sheep raising, and no other class of live stock will make greater profits. Markets for lambs, mutton, and wool are high, and will remain so for many years. With lambs selling at \$9 to \$11 per cwt. live weight in the fall and from \$12 to \$15 in the late winter, a large profit is assured. Add to this wool (unwashed) selling at 58 cents to 68 cents per pound, and sheep raising becomes the most profitable farm industry. There is every possibility for the intelligent farmer to establish a flock even at present prices and make 50 to 75 per cent. net profit per annum on his investment. There are, however, many possible means of losses, such as light lamb crops, heavy mortality in lambs and ewes, feed waste, lamb stunting, intestinal parasites, and many similar troubles which, in the case of the careless or indifferent shepherd, will convert these large profits into an even greater loss. One of the most common losses to the farmer is due to improper marketing. Only well-finished lambs can top the markets and bring the maximum profit.

On the Dominion Experimental Farms some interesting results have been obtained from a number of experiments in lamb feeding conducted during the last few years.

Market Only Fit Lambs.

The large percentage of Canadian lambs are marketed in the fall direct from the pastures, which is undoubtedly the most profitable practice, providing the lambs are well finished on grass alone or on an added grain ration. All the lambs from the farmer's flock are usually lifted at the same time, which means that the well-finished lambs of good weight must help to sell the light, thin lambs, which may be as well bred but, being late lambs or twin lambs, have not done as well as their flock mates. Well finished lambs of uniform weight invariably command a higher price than mixed lambs varying in size, weight, and finish; hence it is always more profitable to hold the lighter lambs and sell only those of uniform weight and finish. Again, the selling of the most of our Canadian lambs during the fall months practically always causes a slump in price. Lambs not required for immediate consumption are held in cold storage to the profit of the wholesaler in view of the usual increase in price of from \$1 to \$3 per hundred pounds between the months of November and April.

When the farmer appreciates these two condi-

tions, the lamb trade will be revolutionized and the farmer will finish his work and reap full profits for foodstuffs consumed by, and labor expended on, his sheep. Many farmers, with abundance of roughage, can well afford to finish from one to three carloads of lambs during the winter months, thereby making top market prices on the farm produce and a good margin of profit in addition. Realizing the existence of such conditions all over the Dominion, a large amount of investigational work along these lines has been conducted on the Dominion Experimental Farms throughout Canada. Details of this work may be seen in the annual reports; however, a

this is also an excellent investment, and is appreciated as such by the farmer.

All good pure-bred ram lambs are in great demand, and should be used as breeders. All inferior pure-bred rams and all grade ram lambs should be castrated early and finished for the block. The high-class market always discriminates against unaltered ram lambs and against unstocked lambs. The wise feeder also realizes that greater and cheaper gains follow these two necessary simple operations.

The class of lamb to buy depends largely on the lambs available, and market requirements. Usually, the well-bred lamb showing plenty of constitution and thrift and weighing from 60 to 80 pounds is the best stocker lamb to put into winter quarters.

The Lambs to Feed.

Lambs weighing from 80 to 100 pounds, if thin, may be profitably put in the feed lot for a short finish, and if good fall pastures are available this may be as profitable a line of work as any. The finished, heavy lamb weighing from 80 to 110 pounds should never be purchased for feeding purposes. The time when greatest profits can be made in purchasing lambs is usually between the months of August and November. However, the condition

of the pastures and of the lambs themselves, as well as the markets, will regulate the time for purchase. The proper time to sell the lambs is when they are finished, whether this be November or April or any intervening month. This applies also to the selling of lambs off grass. Finished lambs will make small gains at a very high cost per pound, which cost will usually be far in excess of the market price at that season. In addition to this, the markets are demanding a well-finished lamb, not overdone, and ranging from 85 to 105 pounds live weight, depending upon the breed and season of the year. This, of course, does not apply to the young-lamb trade of the spring and early summer.

The accompanying table shows the average profits over the cost of feed in the feeding of lambs on the Experimental Farms throughout Canada during the past seven years. This table shows an average profit over feed—on Experimental Farms and Stations throughout Canada, in the feeding of many carloads of lambs—of \$1.15 per lamb when the spread between buying and selling prices is approximately \$2.10. Since the spread between buying and selling prices has

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AVERAGE PROFITS IN WINTER LAMB FEEDING.

Experimental Farm at	Number of yearlings.	Weight of gain in when in feed lot.	Buying price per cwt.		Selling price per cwt.		Spread between buying and selling prices.	Profit over feed, per lamb.
			Lb.	\$ cts.	\$ cts.	\$ cts.		
Ottawa, Ont.	5	99	6 05	8 25	1 60	1 38		
Charlottetown, P.E.I.	5	83	5 57	7 65	2 28	1 22		
Nappan, N.S.	3	84	5 80	7 83	2 03	0 80		
Lennoxville, Que.	1	90	6 00	9 00	3 00	1 65		
Indian Head, Sask.	1	70	6 00	8 00	2 00	0 34		
Lethbridge, Alta.	5	89	5 66	7 67	2 01	1 35		
Average	3	79	5 79	7 50	1 71	1 05		

*Most of the lambs at this Station finished on pasture.

brief summary of the work to date may be timely.

Profits in Winter Feeding Lambs.

In the seven years' work conducted on the Experimental Farms system, the profits on the winter finishing of lambs have ranged from 25 cents per head to \$3.82 per head over the cost of feed. In other words, the Experimental Farms and Stations have purchased unfinished lambs on the open market or from drovers and, after charging good prices for marketable farm feeds and cost prices for other roughages, have made from three to 33 per cent. on the investment in the lambs, labor not included. Even allowing a fair margin for labor, this is as profitable a line of feeding work as can be carried on, and shows a return on investment greater than is usual in the finishing of steers or shoats.

The sex of lambs to finish for the block is at this stage of the sheep industry in Canada a most important consideration. Owing to the great scarcity of breeding ewes and the immediate needs of enlarging the output of the sheep industry, all ewe lambs fit for breeding purposes should be saved and held over for breeding when shearings. Aside from being a national duty,