

SHEEP AND SWINE.

FEEDING AND CARE OF SWINE.

More attention is now paid to the raising of choice breeds of swine than ever before in this country. Our farmers have only of late years thought it worth while to raise pure bred swine, instead of intermixing the good and bad; and the result is better pork, and perhaps larger profits. But there are many who, while very careful in selecting good animals for breeding purposes are very lax in taking proper care of them, and the result is, as we all know, an increase of diseases among swine. While the common scrub or half wild animals, allowed to roam at will the greater part of their lives, usually escape the various swine diseases, the potted pure bred and highly fed are often seriously afflicted with fevers and various intestinal parasites. We do not believe, however, that pure bred animals are naturally any more subject to disease than the scrubs or mixed races; but in consequence of being placed under artificial conditions they often become weakened and unable to resist enemies which appear under the form of diseases. Deprived of full liberty, the animals take but little exercise, and while they may increase in bulk, they will still be becoming weaker every day, until disease steps in and takes off what the owner considers very healthy animals. Another cause of weakness and disease is the almost exclusive feeding of Indian corn, a grain which farmers tell us is the best and most natural food for swine. We admit that corn is an excellent food for swine, especially for the closing weeks of their lives, for it makes a pure, sweet pork; but it is not the best food for the young and growing animal, and while it may be employed sparingly for pigs and shoats, it should never be the only food, nor should it constitute the bulk of the food given. Where corn can be raised cheaply, as in the western States, it is handy food, and many farmers employ it more on that account than any other.

During the spring and summer months the farmer usually has all he can attend to in putting in his crops and harvesting them; and if the hogs are fed regularly, it is with the handiest kind of food, without much regard to the actual wants of the animal, all thoughts of proper diet being put off until some later day. The seeds of disease, are often sown among the swine during a few days of neglect, while an actual outbreak of disease, followed by the death of the animal, may not occur until months afterward. Swine require a variety of food, and while young and growing must have grass, clover, and similar substances in abundance. If corn is to be fed at all, it should be made soft by soaking a few hours, and then be mixed with slops from the house or milk, and, in addition, hogs should always have access to pure water—not that to be found in their wallowing places, but that which is pure and wholesome. Swine should always be kept out at pasture during the summer, and never shut up in small pens during hot weather. Shelter should, of course be provided, where the animals can rest in the shade, but close quarters are unhealthy for swine, as well as other animals.

It is not necessary, nor is it advisable, to keep hogs very fat during warm weather. They should have just enough food to keep them growing rapidly and healthily, and no more; and if kept in this condition they will go into the fattening pen in the fall with sound teeth, good appetites, and healthy digestive organs. All kinds of inferior and broken grain, such as barley, rye, and wheat, may be fed with benefit to growing hogs, and toward fall the quantity may be increased with the addition of peas and various kinds of

roots. We have known many good farmers who never think of feeding a pound of corn to their hogs until the close of the season, or a month or two before killing. Bran, shorts, soaked peas, and similar food are used instead, and the corn is given only to put on a little extra weight and give firmness and solidity to the pork. Our Eastern farmers can make pork cheaper on other kinds of food than corn, and we will venture to say it is as good an article, and the animals are less liable to disease than when the pork is produced exclusively from corn, as is done in many of the western States.

In keeping over store hogs or pigs, as they are usually called, the green, fibrous food should not be withheld, even in winter, and if nothing better can be had, hay, especially clover hay, should be cut up fine, soaked in hot water, and then added to the other kinds of food. Experiments in feeding have shown that a gain of from twenty to thirty per cent. may be obtained by merely adding steamed clover hay to the usual feed of corn or corn meal. If the farmer has a stock of roots, these may be cut up and mixed in instead of hay, but green food of some kind is necessary to keep the hogs in good health.

Brood sows should be in good condition, but never very fat. While suckling their young they should receive food that will increase the flow of milk, such as wheat bran, shorts, cooked barley, or wheat, with plenty of pure water in a trough by itself. Corn at such times is too heating; but a little corn meal may be added to the bran or other food when the pigs are a week or two old. Shelter from storm, pure water, clean yards, and a variety of good and easily digested food are the principal requisites in successful swine husbandry.

IMPROVING COMMON SHEEP.

In a country, feeding for various purposes, forty-five millions of sheep, improvement must start from the common stock; yet a small improvement on such a vast number, if it could be applied at once, would amount to a great sum. The best common sheep that can be had in any given locality, must form the basis for improvement. They must be the stocks on which to graft the blood of improved males, when that can be found. In the older States, this improved blood can be had by all who are now advanced enough in breeding to desire it. But if, even in these States, where the improved blood first came, every flock-owner should at once desire a better blooded ram, prices would, at one bound, mount beyond reach. It may safely be said that improved blood increases as fast as the educated desire of flock-owners to use it. But this education in the principles of breeding and feeding is likely to increase more in the next ten years than in the last fifty, and all the blood of the improved breeds may be expected to be in brisk demand.—*Rural Record*.

A WORD FOR MUTTON.

The mutton of a well-fed sheep of every breed, from the Downs and Shires down to the little-wooled Saxony, is palatable and healthful. None of the objections urged against the use of pork can be brought against that of mutton. It never has been known to impart scrofula, trichinae, or tape-worms to its consumers. The sheep does not thrive in the mire, nor does it consume garbage or vermin, or decaying meats or vegetables. It does not wallow in the trough it feeds from; but it is a dainty and a careful feeder, and as cleanly as needs be in its habits. Mutton is more easily and cheaply produced than beef, is just as nutritious, and may be served in as great a variety of forms. As a steady food it is far superior to

poultry, and costs no more. We mean good, fat, juicy mutton, not that from the half-starved, scabby, or loot-ordered specimens that have outlived their breeding age and been shorn of fleeces enough to furnish shoddy blankets for a tribe of Indians. People in cities seldom know how really good mutton tastes, and the remark may also apply to most families upon the farm. The latter too often fail to try it. We know of many well-to-do farmers, men who have well-stocked farms, who do not slaughter a sheep during a twelve-month, yet who kill a pig every month in the summer season, and in the fall "put down" pork enough to last every other month during the year. This is a nation of meat-eaters, but it confines itself too exclusively to pork and beef. It is better to sandwich in a little more mutton. A few sheep for family consumption, even when they are not kept for sale or for wool, will be found a most excellent investment on all farms.—*Thoroughbred Stock Journal*.

SQUASHES FOR HOGS.

A New York farmer has found that an acre of the Hubbard squash will fatten more hogs than any corn which could be raised on the same ground, and the squashes will keep through winter. He plants twenty feet apart each way, which is thick enough, and little cultivation is required. The crop is easily gathered, no digging being required. The plants are rampant growers, and are out of the way of the hogs in a week, early in the season. The squashes are cracked and passed through a root cutter, and the seeds are sold to dealers in Boston. From six to eight tons have been obtained from an acre, estimated by the waggon load. Where he could sell only a part he fed his cows with the rest and sold the seeds, and found this more profitable than to sell the squashes in market.—*Country Gentleman*.

THE SHEEP SCAB.

Scab in sheep is one of the most troublesome diseases with which the shepherd has to contend. The cause of the disease is a minute insect, *Acaris scabiei*, which burrows under the epidermis, producing irritation of the skin. Small watery blisters soon form, which finally becomes dry and encrusted, forming the scab proper. These being produced in various parts of the body, causes the wool to become matted, and the sheep, to relieve the itching and irritation, run against fences, posts, etc., and tear their wool into shreds, giving them a wretched appearance. The disease is rapidly spread in a flock where healthy sheep come in contact with these fences, posts, etc., for the eggs of the mite, or the mite itself, may be readily transferred from the sheep to the fence and from the fence to sheep again. Hence it will hardly be necessary to caution against allowing healthy sheep to be in the same pen or field with scabby ones. The only method of ridding the diseased sheep of the scab is, to dip them into a liquid which will penetrate and soften the scabby portions, and even then it is often necessary to rub these places with something rough, to open the scabs, and let the liquid take effect. A sheep dip made of one ounce of sulphur and four of tobacco to a gallon of water, has been found very effective. In the water, which should be at the boiling point, steep tobacco stems or leaves, and add the sulphur later; then allow the liquid to cool down, when the sheep may be immersed.

The question of silk culture in Tennessee is receiving considerable attention throughout the State at present. Commissioner McWhirter has distributed 100,000 silk worm eggs gratuitously through the State, and numbers of persons are becoming interested in the business.