



"The Farmer's Advocate" Orchard in Bloom.

View of orchard No. 1 (on Mr. Poole's farm), taken from south-west corner. Note the profusion of bloom, also the shape and vigorous condition of the trees. Photo May 20th, 1911.

THE FARM BULLETIN.

Ruralities from Australia.

The returns of the wheat States this year show that the variety known as Federation has remained on top. It was bred by the late William Farrer, and is a cross between Fife and Indian wheats, having been then crossed with Purple Straw. Over large areas it averaged 24 bushels to the acre. Experts are now contending that too much attention is being paid to the production of weighty wheats, without regard to the milling qualities. As the prices are all the same, there is no inducement held out to do anything else. A great deal of the trouble is due to the fact that a greater proportion of the grain raised is exported whole, instead of being converted into flour and then exported. By this practice the country is also losing all the bran and pollard.

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The White Leghorns have succeeded in winning the dozen competitions which recently concluded in Australia and New Zealand. The winning pen of six at Gatton, Queensland, produced 1,520 eggs for the year. At the Hawkesbury College, N. S. W., the winning pen of six of the same breed laid an aggregate of 1,321 eggs. In this competition the first twelve pens were White Leghorns. In the test running over two years the same breed succeeded, the pen laying 2,369 eggs. In the test extending over three years, a pen of Black Orpingtons carried honors, producing during the term 3,017 eggs. It is contended at the College that this is the first data secured in the world for so long a period. The result disputes the theory that hens should not be kept for three years for egg production. At the same institution, a pen of Indian runner ducks won the prize, with 2,464 eggs for two years. The first year they laid 1,278 eggs, and the balance in the second year. The principal of the College points out in his official report that the test has demonstrated that this breed of duck will lay better in the second year than any other breed. The ducks, however, cost more than the hens to feed. The test to prove the relative values of dry and wet feeding was conclusive that the latter was by far the most profitable.

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Irish potato blight has got a great hold of the agricultural States of Australia. Scarcely a district has escaped. It is estimated that the loss of crops this year will involve a million pounds sterling. A potato famine for the coming season is in prospect.

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This has been one of the most humid seasons ever experienced in Australia, though New Zealand has been obliged to suffer one of the driest on record. The rains in the Commonwealth have been most abundant; in fact, over vast areas there has been far too much. Inland lakes which have been dry clay-pans for years are filled, and large swamps are teeming with wild fowl and large quitoes. There are hundreds of miles of country in the grazing districts with grass standing knee-high, and no stock of any sort to eat it down.

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could be induced to go to Australia, he would not be suitable, as he would not be taught anything; and, as the mode and methods of farming are so different in the Old Country, as compared to Australia, he would be practically in the way. On the other hand, the other type of recruit would be willing to learn, and would set out with a determination to succeed at the new life. These opinions are highly disappointing to Australians who had been led to believe by other people that the British farm hand would be the very class to succeed in the country, first as employees, and secondly as settlers themselves. [Editor's Note—In view of the depopulation of Scottish rural districts now going on, the advice of the delegate, that the Australian farmers should look to British bank clerks and shop assistants for help, instead of to British farm laborers, is assuredly worthy of a canny Scotchman.]

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A statistician in New Zealand has been going into the question of what it costs to produce stock per head in that country. Of course, it would be impossible to arrive at the exact acreage occupied by the various animals. But, for the purposes of calculation, six sheep were adjudged to be equivalent to one horned beast, and eight sheep to a horse. Wool is reckoned at five-eighths and three-eighths of what a sheep returns. On this basis, wool is calculated to return a fraction over four shillings and two pence, and meat two shillings and six pence per head of the sheep grazed. Taking the exports of mutton and lamb, in addition to the local consumption, it works out that each sheep produces 15 pounds of meat annually, and, as the annual yield of fleece in the Dominion for 1908 was 7.3 pounds, the estimate is reached that it costs just exactly two pence per pound for meat, and 6.96 pence a pound for wool—just a fraction under seven pence. Thus it is claimed that there is a profit of two shillings per head on each sheep in the Dominion. These calculations are based on the figures for eight years, so it is a fair average.

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The wonderful results of the dowser's rod to find water in Queensland pastoral areas seem to have silenced the skeptics of the strange power. These wielders of the twig got a great lift when the Government of that State took a dowser under its wing a few years ago, and he succeeded in getting water when indiscriminate sinking before had failed. The result was that a large area of country, otherwise too dry for settlement, was made possible for small settlers. In most cases the dowsers are paid by results. If there is no water on sinking or boring, there is no fee payable. A number of them are contractors, who undertake the work of locating spots and then tapping them. This proves their confidence in their powers. If they failed to reach water after sinking an expensive bore, the loss would be very great, as they might have to penetrate any depth up to 4,000 feet to reach the water-bearing strata. Whole districts have been revolutionized by the agency of the diviner. Sheep and cattle can now be carried with safety where a few years ago the risks were too great to chance occupancy, owing to the lack of water. The knowledge of the existence of the artesian belt and the assistance of the dowser has worked the change.



Profusion of Bloom in "The Farmer's Advocate" Orchard.

Contrary to appearance, this orchard is not in sod, but is again being cultivated till the latter part of June or thereabouts, when a cover crop will again be sown.