

STOCK.

Western Steer Feeding.

BY RICHARD GIBSON, DELAWARE, ONT.

I have lately seen the way cattle are handled by the western feeders; at one farm I found 400 steers in a bunch divided in two lots by a fence running through centre of yard, the smaller steers being together; attached to each was a deep, open shed, under which, by close crowding, nearly the whole lot could lie in cold nights or stormy days; it is needless to say they were all dehorned. Water troughs in this shed never froze, and self-feeding troughs containing corn and bran, and large racks holding clover hay were the appurtenances thereof. Again, there were racks all around the yard and through the centre where corn and bran could be fed fine days, and night and morning these were filled with corn fodder, partially husked.

These steers were put up to feed in October, and had gained over 400 pounds per head, at a cost of about nine cents per head per day.

It seemed a careless way of feeding, with corn and hay before them all the time; still, I am more convinced than ever that we in Canada cannot compete with the western feeder, and that should there be a reciprocity treaty with the United States I feel satisfied my village butcher would be cutting up western-fed beef.

What astonished me most was the ease with which these steers were fed corn and bran in self-feeding troughs, to be had for the trouble of walking thereto. Water and clover hay ditto, *ad libitum*. The stalks were loaded in field into waggons and hauled direct to yards, two men doing the feeding night and morning, simply as chores.

In Canada, with our root pulping, grain grinding, chaff cutting, mixing and feeding, cleaning out barns, etc., it would take at least fifteen to do what the two were accomplishing west, and the results equally as good. I have since ascertained that the bunch to which I refer have been sold. I figure out the profit about \$18 to \$20 per head, besides the manure. Now, here comes the rub: What is that manure worth? To the average Wisconsin farmer, perhaps not much, though they certainly do appreciate that essential to good farming more than their cousins on the black prairie corn belt soil. In Canada and England steers are often fed to convert certain crops into manure. We expect a profit on the feeding; that is, we expect to sell to ourselves the coarse grains grown on the farm, to be fed to steers at a higher figure than the quoted market price. That is a direct profit, but the indirect is one of perhaps greater importance; that is, as manure factories converting the coarse grains and fodder into pabulum for future crops; and just as long as well-made barn manure produces the crops that it does, acting well on all soils not drowned with water, so long will steers be fed. Fortunately for western feeders, corn grows so naturally, can be produced so cheaply, and being highly carbonaceous, the crop takes but little out of the soil, hence can be grown often on same field. Moreover, it is such capital feed for cold weather, and answers its purpose so cheaply and well, that the question is scarcely ever raised as to whether other feeds might be advantageously fed with it; and while it may be necessary in many parts of the continent to consider feeds from both a manurial and feeding standpoint, such will not occur for many years within the strictly black soil corn belt. But in other parts the question is becoming more serious every year—how to keep up the fertility of the soil? It may be asked, why bother with feeding cattle for the manure, when one can buy artificial manure so cheaply and so scientifically mixed. The reply is, that it is by no means certain in its results, its value depending in a great measure upon the amount of rain-fall in the season; it is effervescent in its effects, soon over with; it is useful to the market gardener or seedman, who commands big prices for his produce; but for the farm proper, except for occasional crops, it will never take the place of well-made barn manure made by animals when fed on nitrogenous foods, such as peas, oats, linseed and cotton cakes. The two latter have never taken the place in America amongst the favorite feeds that they deserve, nor occupy the same position as in England. So valuable are they regarded there that a tenant farmer leaving his occupancy gets a portion of two years cake bill paid.

I was rather astonished to learn that it paid to buy bran, when \$12 a ton, to mix with corn, when the latter was worth 25 cents per seventy pounds. I can understand that the addition of bran would make a more balanced ration, but where that was not considered, but simply used because it paid in beef, was what surprised me.

Another cause of wonder to me was the loose state of the bowels of the steers. Had I not seen the evidences of kindly growth and fast feeding in the bright eye, glossy coat, curly hair of good length, and the care bestowed upon it by the animals licking themselves, I should have thought they were scouring, consequently under the influence of some irritating substance, and, therefore, not in proper health to digest and assimilate their food. In Canada we can make beef at profit, but it must be at high pressure, feeding right from birth, and turn off at eighteen months to two years, and could the generous feeding steer of old still be purchased, we could feed at a profit, even in these days of low prices. The steers of thirty years ago

are to be seen no more. It was hoped that the Scotch Shorthorn would exert an influence for great good. As show cattle, they are small and neat, but where are the steers? I believe they are getting commoner yearly.

In addition to the steers, there is another element of profit in connection with the feeding thereof, and that is the Poland China, as a scavenger, a perfect success; as a utilizer of waste, he stands without a rival; but as a first-class bacon hog, I am afraid the claims of his partisans are overdrawn; neither his conformation or the food he so evidently enjoys seem to me conducive to the manufacture of that choice side meat styled breakfast bacon.

I was much amused watching them. They evidently understood when to expect a ration, and I never knew until I saw them following steers why they flopped their ears. *It is to protect their eyes.* What cute creatures. Here I've been saying to breeders for years, "You've got an almost perfect hog in the Poland China for your purpose of converting corn into pork; but there is something wanting; they lack finish; if you could only breed them with prick ears, what an improvement it would be." But the Poland China knows his business, and evidently refuses to be improved that way. Wise hog!

Chatty Stock Letter from the States.

FROM OUR CHICAGO CORRESPONDENT.

Best 1,400 to 1,700-lb. bullocks sold at \$5.10, being 70c. higher than a fortnight ago and only 40c. to 50c. lower than a year ago; best Texas steers, \$4.45, against \$4.75 twelve months ago; distillery cattle, \$4.25 to \$4.75, against \$4.90 to \$5.10 a year ago; heavy hogs, \$4.90, against \$5 two weeks ago and \$7 a year ago.

During the past half-month the situation in the cattle market has materially improved, especially from the sellers' point of view. Indeed, though prices are higher, buyers seem to be better satisfied, as the higher prices denote a healthier and more desirable state of the general trade. An old cattle buyer assures the writer that as a rule he would sooner do business when values were high than when they were depressed. However, the position of the market, with reference to light and heavy cattle, has shifted, and now the ripe, heavy beefs are commanding the premiums they merit. The distillery cattle feeders are moving out a good many cattle, at \$4.25 to \$4.50.

A well-known member of the so-called "big four," who bought a big lot of Canadian stillers two years ago, and lost so much on them, recently contracted a lot of Kentucky stillers. The first half was delivered, but the second half he claimed lacked quality, and he claimed a reduction in price. The owners, however, who knew as well as he that the market had gone up since the deal was made, were very anxious to take the cattle back. As soon as the buyer learned that they were up to his favorite little game, he at once decided that the cattle were good enough to pass.

Some 1,545-lb. distillery bulls sold at \$3.65 to an exporter; a lot of 1,250 to 1,400-lb. distillery steers sold at \$4.55 to \$4.75, with some 1,200-lb. glucose-fed steers, at \$3.80.

Texas cattle are selling well, and are coming to market more freely. A lot of 1,153 lb. steers, which sold at \$4.45, had been run on grass and fed 6 lbs. of cottonseed meal per head per day. Grass cattle are not yet fat enough to be good beef, but they are improving rapidly.

Horses are selling nearly as well as other live stock. The receipts show over 7,000 more horses sold this year than in 1893, up to the first of June, at the Union Stock Yards. Late offerings were principally drivers and 1,200-lb. chunks, the latter selling up to \$115, and drivers from \$70 to \$225, according to quality and action. The demand for saddlers is quite light.

Best sheep, \$6.50, or 35c. lower than a fortnight and 65c. lower than a year ago. Lambs, same as two weeks ago, and \$2.00 per 100 lbs. lower than a year ago. Following is an abstract of one day's business in the sheep house:—Receipts, 8,000 head; a great many spring lambs sold at \$3 to \$4, and some down to \$2.75. Included in the receipts were 1,632 head of 122-lb. Western sheep, which were contracted to an exporter at \$4.75. An extra prime bunch of 129-lb. Western sheep sold to an exporter at \$4.50, and 417, averaging 113 lbs., at \$4.25; choice 100-lb. Indiana sheep sold for \$4.40; medium sheep sold at \$3 to \$4, and common stuff at \$1 to \$2.50. Lambs ranged from \$2.75 to \$5.10.

The death of Jacob May, formerly of New York, but for years cattle buyer for Armour, removes another well-known cattle man.

The question of a location for the Annual Fat Stock Show is again being discussed. There is dissatisfaction with the Stock Yards site, as not being central enough.

Tuberculosis in Wisconsin.

At the Wisconsin Agricultural Experiment Station, Madison, last winter, one of the cows in the station herd was noticed to be running down in flesh rapidly. Dr. Russel, bacteriologist, and Dr. Clark, veterinarian, began an investigation, and 25 out of 30 cows responded to the tuberculin test. Up to date some 28 have been slaughtered, and 26 of them showed tubercular consumption of the lungs, several cases being very bad.

Shorthorns, Present and Past—Dorsets on the Move.

I have lately succeeded in purchasing for Senator Cochran fifty Shorthorn bulls for his Northwest ranch. They were a good lot, and ought to make their mark, as they will be employed with a lot of good cows, steers from which have averaged \$40 per head in Montreal, clear of expenses. The Senator once owned the most valuable Bates herd ever in the Dominion, and what is of as much importance, made the most money out of them. Tenth Dutchess Airtes and her four daughters cost something like \$30,000. I am speaking from memory, and it has to go back many years. They and produce realized over \$150,000 when sold. Then we must not forget Duchess 97, imported from England at a cost of 1,000 guineas, as she became such a noted matron being dam of 1st and 2nd Dukes of Hillhurst. This sale of 97, by Capt. Gunter, for 1,000 guineas, was so much commented upon at the time by Bates breeders that it was mainly instrumental in my getting Bride of the Vale from Tom Booth at the same figure. This was at the time of the Wars of the Roses—or Booth and Bates. Feeling ran so high that a Booth breeder would not attend a Bates sale, and if rural breeders happened to meet at a mutual friend's house, it was under protest. But I am rambling; these old associations carry me away. How gratifying it is to know that the man who held and owned both the best Bates and Booth in Canada, and probably the best on the continent, with one exception, and also made the most money out of them, still has faith in the sort, and that, while his contemporaneous breeders of any note are all either dead or gone out of the business, he still sticks to the breed, and buys bulls for breeding steers. Not much romance here—but strict business; and had some of the meteors had the same faith that he has, they would have been breeding to-day.

I also wish to note that I have purchased for the Hillhurst branch of same firm, the entire flock of Dorsets from Mr. T. W. Hector; they are indeed a good lot, and what surprised me most was the condition, considering the pasture. While Springfield is a most romantic spot, and must be eventually valuable for building sites, overlooking, as it does, the Credit River, the banks being nicely wooded with pine, whose fragrance was particularly noticeable by one to whom a pine is almost a curiosity, all these attractions are scarcely what one would look for on a sheep farm; hence my surprise at the condition.

The rams are thin, compared to what they were at Chicago, but there are seven imported ewes that I doubt can be duplicated on this continent. Though, of course, not as fat as when at Chicago, they impress one quite as much; the gloss and glare, the spangles and the ringmaster's crack of the whip, are wanting, but the outline is there; the same performers, but in deshabille. I sincerely hope they may do well and give satisfaction.

RICHARD GIBSON, Delaware.

FARM.

The Fall Show.

BY R. E. KING.

The Fall Show was instituted with the hope of introducing improved methods of farming, by means of prices offered for the best agricultural products.

"Is it fulfilling its mission, and what benefits, if any, are to be derived from the inspection of the exhibits?" has been made the subject of this paper.

We find that, as a rule, most people avow that what they attend the fall shows for is to see the "folks and the fun," not going with the expectation of learning methods which would benefit them financially. There must be a reason for this. True, they will see examples of good stock, but they are viewed as curiosities or as something helping to supply amusement. Such questions as, What methods of feeding and breeding were followed in order to achieve the results obtained, together with the profit resulting from growing animals of the type shown? are unattainable. In fact, it is generally conceded that the majority of show animals are not produced at a profit, the truth being that the exhibits are not intended to be educational, but are shown as a means of advertisement for the owner.

It does not require a money grant from the Government to tell any farmer that plenty of feed and care bestowed upon an animal will produce one that is superior to those which have lacked a sufficiency of either or both, yet this is about the extent of the knowledge to be derived from attending the average show. What particular combinations of food, with cost of same, together with methods of feeding, how cared for, as regards stabling, pasturage and watering? These and many of the questions which would be of assistance to the visitor in reducing the cost and increasing the quality of his cattle, sheep and pigs, as the case might be, he has no means of learning. The same is true of the cereal department, where may be seen a bushel or two of, say peas, of which there are several bags, one of which has received first prize. Why it has done so we are left to judge for ourselves. Then, what do we find are the conditions which entitle it to the distinction of being placed first?

1st. Freedom from dirt, which is the result of careful work with the fanning mill. 2nd. Evenness of size attained by passing over two sieves, one taking out the large, the other the small grains. 3rd. Large size for the kind, brought about by screening