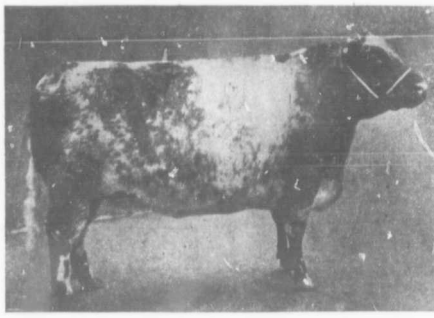


Our English Letter

Smithfield Show—The King's Successes—A Shorthorn Champion—Carcase Classes—Wasting Disease in Cattle—Interesting Items



Earl Roseberry's Shorthorn Heifer, "Jewell," champion Smithfield Show, 1904. See English Letter.

London, Dec. 10.

Smithfield week is looked forward to by all classes of British agriculturists for it is a time of re-unions and to a certain extent festivities. The weather during the present year of grace has been disheartening; when it has not been raining there has been a nasty raw fog and some idea can be formed that it did rain, as on one day only we had almost an inch and a quarter. The show itself has been a good one, and it is rare that we see a better lot of stock than was exhibited in the Agricultural Hall this year. Winners from Edinburgh, Birmingham, Norwich and other provincial fixtures were on view, consequently the competition was very keen. His Majesty the King evinced his interest in the show by exhibiting a considerable number of animals from Windsor and Sandringham, and in addition visited the show in person, accompanied by H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, who may be mentioned as having come into office as president in 1906.

SHORTHORN THE CHAMPION

As regards the show itself the entries were good, and comprised 276 head of cattle, 169 pens of sheep and 106 pens of swine, and the prizes amounted to over £4,000. The champion animal this year is a roan Shorthorn heifer named Jewell. She was bred in Scotland by Mr. John Ross and is a fine lengthy beast, near the ground, with splendid quarters and a good back. She was 2 years, 8 months, 3 weeks, 6 days old and weighed 15 cwt., 2 qrs., 18 lbs. It was thought that the King's Devon steer by Quantock Bridegroom would be the reserve animal, but this was not so, the position falling to Lord Strathmore's Vintage of Glamis, who had been previously declared the best Aberdeen Angus. Lord Roseberry's Shorthorn heifer came to the show with champion honors from the Scottish National Show at Edinburgh. The Birmingham champion, Lady Jane, secured the first prize in her class and the silver medal for the best cross bred. The Norwich champions were completely outclassed.

H. M. the King secured the silver cup for the best steer with his Devon, and the same animal won the challenge cup for the best beast in the show bred by exhibitor. The breed cup for

Herefords was won by Lord Llangattock and Sir Walter Corbet a similar award for Red Polls.

SHEEP AND SWINE

The sheep were a capital lot; the champion plate for the best pen of three long wools went to Messrs. S. E. Dean & Sons, whose exhibit at 21 months old weighed 8 cwt., 3 qrs., 12 lbs., while His Majesty won the similar award for short wools with three of the same age and scaling 5 cwt., 3 qrs., 16 lbs. These were Southdowns, bred at Sandringham and were afterwards awarded the challenge cup for the best pen in the show; it should be mentioned too, that they were champions at Birmingham and Norwich.

Pigs formed an interesting section, and rarely if ever have I seen a better lot at any of our shows. The champion plate fell to Mr. A. Brown for a pen which scaled 8 cwt., 12 lbs., at the age of 11½ months. The special for the best single pig was won by His Majesty the King.

THE CARCASE CLASSES

were well filled and attracted a good deal of attention. The animals were exhibited alive on Monday and judged by inspectors, after which they were removed, slaughtered and placed as beef and mutton, this proving an interesting object lesson. The champion prize was won by a splendid body of beef from a cross-bred steer. This animal was by an Aberdeen Angus bull from a Shorthorn cow, and dressed remarkably well, as will be seen from the following particulars: Live weight, 13 cwt., 3 qrs., 26 lbs.; carcase weight 977 lbs.; suet, caul and reed fat, 17 lbs.; fat and trimmings, 26 lbs.; tongue and tail, 11 lbs.; head and feet, 57 lbs.; heart, liver, etc. 44 lbs.; tripe, etc., 114 lbs.; hide, 86 lbs., and intestines, 27 lbs. When judged alive the animal was not noticed.

The sheep championship was won by a Suffolk, which produced some very fine mutton, the carcase showing an unusual proportion of clean meat of beautiful quality. A live weight of 152 lbs. gave 91 lbs. carcase weight, with only 8½% of water fat. The best pig gave a carcase weight 77 lbs. from a live weight of 123; this pork was not unduly fat, but many of the exhibits were greatly overfed.

ROYAL SHOW, 1905

It is practically certain that the Royal Agricultural Society will hold a show next year, for although a guarantee of £10,000 was asked for and only some £5,000 has been obtained, the annual meeting of members held this week showed what popular opinion was on the subject. A supplemental charter is to be obtained in order to enable the council of the society to be elected on popular lines and the internal finances are to be thoroughly overhauled. Of course all this will take time but it is encouraging to know that at last the society bids fair to be placed on a firm basis. The absence even for one year would be a terrible disaster for our stock-breeders, and it is gratifying to find that the show will, after all, take place.

A WASTING DISEASE OF CATTLE

An investigation has lately been carried out into the cause and cure of a wasting disease to which young cattle are extensively liable in Ireland. The mortality from this disease in County Wexford alone, where it has long been known, is estimated to have amounted to 300 during last winter. Many post-mortem examinations have been made and in every case the fourth stomach has been found infested with myriads of minute nematode worms, and therefore it is concluded that the disease is parasitic. Eggs of the parasite are found in the droppings of infested animals. Vermicides have been tried in several cases, but without any marked benefit, as they become much diluted by the time they reached the fourth stomach. It was found much better to feed the animals liberally with nourishing food, thus enabling them slowly to get the upper hand of their parasitic enemies.

ITEMS

Fruit markets are dull and depressed just now. Canadian and Nova Scotia apples have not yet arrived in over abundant quantities but prices have remained easy. French apples arrive in crates, barrels and cases, but they are not wanted, as the quality is very poor.

Provision markets are dull and depressed and there are no new features worthy of interest. Things ought to take a turn for the better with more wintry weather.

An agitation is on foot asking the Board of Agriculture to undertake an inquiry into foot rot. It is suggested that the committee should deal with the following points: (1) as to whether there is more than one disease which brings lameness; (2) whether either or both are contagious; (3) the cause or origin of both or one as the case may be.

The "sleepy disease" of tomatoes, although known for some seasons, has grown much more rife of late years.

The first indication that the tomato is affected is shown by the drooping of the leaves and their bad color. If the root is split the woody portion is seen: to be of a yellowish brown color, which becomes more marked as it left open for a day. The disease is due to a fungus which flourishes in the soil and enters the plant by the root.

One of our leading cider makers visited Canada last year and purchased a number of apples for cider making. Excellent results have been obtained and the quality of the cider made is quite up to his usual standard, which is saying a good deal.

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