

Grading Up the Farm Flock.

In 1910 and 1911 a flock of Western range ewes was established on the Brandon Experimental Farm to be used as foundation stock in a grading-up experiment. They were the usual type of range ewe, small and mean looking, showing a great mixture of breeding, but with Merino blood showing up rather strongly throughout. These ewes were bred to a good pure-bred Oxford Down ram. When their lambs came to breeding age, another ram of the same breed was used, and this line of breeding kept up consistently. The flock was increased about 50 per cent. in numbers at first, then bred at a uniform number each year. Each fall the least desirable of the ewes were culled out and the remainder kept for breeding. In the fall of 1916 the last of the original ewes were disposed of, and in the fall of 1917 all first cross ewes that showed in their appearance any sign of their mongrel origin were disposed of. Consequently, the breeding flock in 1918 consisted of a lot of Oxford Down grades of uniform size and shape, all with dark brown faces and wool of uniform type. This complete change in the appearance of the flock was accomplished in this short time simply by using each year a pure-bred sire. In this time the average size of the sheep was increased nearly 50 per cent., and the average wool clip about 30 per cent. The first cross of Oxford on the range blood produced a sheep of decidedly Oxford character with an increase in size, but they were not uniform in appearance, and many showed signs of the dam's breeding or lack of breeding. The second cross was a great improvement over the first, and the third cross resulted in a sheep that was practically indistinguishable from a pure-bred.

While the Oxford Down breed was used in this experiment, it is not the purpose of this article to recommend that breed above others. The range ewes were conspicuously lacking in size, and the Oxford was chosen partly to increase the size. Other breeds that might have been used for that purpose are the Hampshire or the Suffolk of the Down breeds, or the Leicester, Cotswold or Lincoln of the long wools. Or, if breeding up is to attain more compact form, with earlier maturity, the South-down or Shropshire might be used.

The results obtained in this experiment have been duplicated by many practical sheep raisers throughout the West. There is no reason why many others should not attain similar successes, changing their present nondescript mongrel flocks to fine, uniform, handsome flocks closely resembling pure-breds of the breed they choose to use sires from. The process is very simple, choose a good breed, buy good individual sires of that breed, stick to the one breed and reject the culls. This, with good general care, and feeding, will very quickly accomplish the desired result.—Experimental Farms Note.

Questions and Answers. Veterinary.

Scab or Mange.

Is there such a disease as the scab in cattle? If so, how does it make its appearance, and is it contagious?

N. D.

Ans.—Cattle are subject to a skin disease usually called "mange," but sometimes called "scab." It is due to a parasite. The first symptoms are the appearance of little nodules on the skin. These soon become vesicles, break and discharge a watery fluid, which soon dries on the surface, forming crusts and are liable to be succeeded by ulceration. The hair falls off, or a few hairs persist and project from the crusts. The skin becomes thickened, devoid of sensibility, dry, harsh and corrugated. By removing a crust or scab and examining the under surface with a microscope the parasites can be seen. It is very contagious. V.

Pete, a bashful colored man, became enamoured of a dusky maiden, but not having the courage to "pop the question" personally called up the house where she worked and spoke to her over the telephone.

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