

## COMPARATIVE PROFITS OF WHEAT-GROWING AND SHEEP-RAISING.

We find an interesting article, by E. W. EDGERSON, Summit, Waukesha co., in the *Wis. Farmer* for November, respecting the comparative profits of wheat-growing and sheep-raising, a portion of which we give below:—

"As there seems to be a general lack of interest manifested by our farmers this fall in regard to wool growing and sheep husbandry, (owing in a great measure, undoubtedly, to the decline in the prices of wool, and the advance in the prices of breadstuffs and coarse grains,) and as I have had seventeen years practical experience in grain raising in this State—connecting with it the three past years that of sheep husbandry—I claim the privilege through your columns, of relating my experience to our brother farmers on these subjects. I shall take the occasion to compare the two branches of husbandry with each other; and, in doing so, shall refer to no better authority than my own experience, to make my arguments good in favor of the latter branch, hoping, should any one be convinced, that they will "cease to do evil," and learn to do that which is good for themselves.

"In the month of May, 1837, I commenced farming operations in this town, on my present location, on a tract of land containing 830 acres, in the state of nature, and at that time thirteen miles from "anywhere."

"During a period of ten years (from 1837 to 1847) I devoted my attention to grain raising, making winter wheat the staple article, averaging during the period, about 100 acres of wheat per annum, with the general average of about twenty-two bushels per acre, which was sold at prices ranging from 44 cts. to \$1.06 per bushel—the receipts being sufficient to pay all expenses, including the improvements made on the farm, which consisted in clearing and getting under cultivation, and fencing about 500 acres—with sufficient small change left to clothe myself and better half.

"The unsuccessful part of this branch of farming I will relate in a few words. It commenced with the harvest of 1847, which averaged only about twelve bushels per acre, and of inferior quality. The harvest of 1848, ten bushels per acre; that of 1849, eight bushels. I resolved, therefore, on making one more desperate effort; and in the fall of 1849 I sowed 200 acres of wheat, in good season and in good condition—expecting, should I realize a good crop, to turn my attention to sheep husbandry the following year. But again I was doomed to disappointment—the harvest of 1850 averaging only ten bushels per acre, which sold in market at about 60 cts. per bushel—not sufficient to cover expenses.

"The harvest of 1851 was more productive, but the quality inferior to previous years. I succeeded this year in borrowing \$1500, at 12 per cent. interest; and, in the month of October, 1851, invested \$1059 50 cts. in 557 sheep, being at an average cost of \$1.90 per head. The flock consisted of 306 ewes, 176 wethers, 55 lambs, and 20 bucks. The balance of the \$1500 was used in patching up our extended

credit and preparing winter quarters for our flocks. The following June, 546 reported themselves ready to be shorn—the records of mortality showing a loss of eleven during the winter and spring.

"The receipts from the flock the season of 1852, were as follows:

1390 $\frac{1}{2}$ lbs wool, sold Brown & Larkin, 35 $\frac{1}{2}$ cts.	\$532.83
105 $\frac{1}{2}$ lbs " " " 32 $\frac{1}{2}$ cts.	34.28
259 sheep sold sundry persons, averaging \$2.17	564.25
Add 210 lambs to the increase of 1852, at \$2.17	456.70

Total.....\$1597.06

"The average weight of fleece being 2 13-16 lbs.

"In estimating the expense of keeping sheep, I will put the prices (at what I believe most farmers will agree with me in,) to correspond with the price of wheat in market, at one dollar per bushel.

15 tons of wild hay, at \$3 per ton (per 100 sheep.)	\$45.00
37 $\frac{1}{2}$ bushels corn, being a peck per day for 5 months (per 100.)	18.75
1 bbl. salt per year	2.50
Shearing, washing, sacking, twine and marketing	8.75
30 weeks pasturage, at one penny per head per week	30.00
Care of shepherd, being one man's time per 1000 sheep, 7 months	10.00

Making \$1.15 per head, or per hundred.....\$115.00

"Or, compare the cost of wheat, at 75 cts. per bushel in market, would make 86 $\frac{1}{2}$  cts. per head, which I believe to be about the actual cost of either item. I make no account of interest, for in making the comparison with wheat raising, I offset the interest on capital invested in sheep against the expense and wear and tear of soil in raising wheat. Deduct the expense of keeping 557 sheep, at \$1.15, which is \$640.55 from \$1587.06, the net receipts, and you have the net profit of \$956.51, or, \$1.50 per head, for the year 1852.

"After deducting the number sold, and the losses, we have left, including our lambs, 497 sheep, to which we added by purchase in the fall, 470 more, at an average price of \$2.42 per head, amounting to \$1137.40; going into winter quarters for 1853, with 967, of which 400 were ewes, 286 wethers, 246 lambs, and 35 bucks. Of this number, only 866 were up and dressed at shearing time in June, 1853—having sold during the winter 18, and the records of mortality showing the demise of the alarming number of 83 during the winter and spring, by causes to us *not unknown*. "Thereby hangs a tale," as the saying is, which, Mr. Editors, is too lengthy to relate in this number; but as I desire to record my experience in *book farming*, you shall have it at some future time.

"The receipts from the flock for 1853, were as follows:

19 sheep, sold during the winter (including 7 bucks.)	\$134.00
2067 lbs. wool, sold Haskins, at 50 cts.	1465.50
417 sheep sold sundry persons, averaging \$2.55	1063.35
91 pelts sold, including those of 1852, at \$2.50	600.00

Amounting to the sum of.....\$3261.85

"Deduct the expense of keeping 967 sheep, at \$1.15 per head—\$1112.05; leaving the net sum of \$232 per head for 1853. The average weight of fleece this year was 3 lbs. 6 $\frac{1}{2}$  oz.

"After deducting the number sold, the dead, and eleven missing during the summer, we have left, including lambs, 678: to which we added in the fall, 442, at an average price of \$2.50 per head, amounting to \$1105, going into winter quarters for the