

STOCK

Pen for Sows

EDITOR FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

Could you let me know where I can get plans for a hog pen to house twelve brood sows?

Alta.

A. H. COOMBS.

Ans.—It is not advisable as a rule to put up expensive pens for brood sows. The sows do not do as well when penned up as when running outside, and individual pens are required only at farrowing time. In summer they are better outside than in. In winter any kind of cheap shelter does. One of the best plans we ever saw for handling a number of sows was in use on a Saskatchewan farm. The owner constructed a rough pen of poles, size about ten feet by fourteen feet and six or seven feet high. All the pen consisted of was two or three posts set in the ground along each side and end. On top of these was laid some good-sized poles, and a rough flat roof of poles laid on. He then threshed a stack of straw over the pole frame, making sides and roof. All he had to do when the pen was needed was to dig an opening into the enclosure. This pen located some distance from where the sows were fed forced them to take exercise by walking fifty yards or so to and from the trough each meal time. Exercise is very necessary for sows in winter, if one is expecting them to produce good-sized, healthy litters in the spring.

We would not go to any expense in fixing pens for sows except at farrowing. Even then they can be cheaply penned, and as soon as the pigs are weaned turned out again. Professor Day, in his book on swine, advises carrying the sows over winter in pens eight feet wide, sixteen feet long, seven feet high in front and three and a half feet high at the back, with a shanty roof. A window in front and an opening large enough for the sows to pass in or out. These pens may be made of single ply of inch boards with battens over the cracks. A pen of the size given will accommodate from eight to ten sows, though it is better as a rule not to have more than six sows together. In wintering sows always have the feeding place some distance from the sleeping quarters and make them exercise in going after their feed.

Development of the Sheep Industry in Canada

EDITOR FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

For a number of years it has been evident, and it is now a matter of common knowledge that the sheep industry in Canada, particularly as regards the general production of market sheep and of high-class wool, has been in an increasing decadent condition. Not only has the number of sheep owned in the country been gradually lessening, but the interest in sheep-growing has itself been on the wane. The census of sheep in Canada reveals the fact that the Dominion compares not at all favorably with other great agricultural countries of the world. Indeed, as compared with them it has permitted sheep-raising to become a somewhat insignificant phase of its agriculture, notwithstanding its great adaptability both as regards soil and climate for the growing of mutton and wool. In 1909, according to agricultural returns, there were in the United Kingdom 31,838,833 head of sheep, in the Argentine 67,211,754 head, in Australia 77,043,266 head, in New Zealand 23,480,707 head, while the latest returns for Canada place the number at not more than 2,705,390 head. In view of the fact that sheep have not only a direct and primary value through the actual financial returns which they make to their owners, but because they represent as well in themselves a peculiarly important asset in agriculture, owing to their ability to increase soil fertility and to check and destroy the growth of weeds upon the land, the situation which

the above figures suggest appears to be a rather critical one, and one which will receive careful consideration.

The reasons for the decline in the sheep industry in Canada have been the subject of much comment in various ways, and while these need not be discussed in this note it may be well to state that the live-stock branch has had its attention very urgently directed toward the present unsatisfactory status of the business, and in recognition of its importance to the country generally has now decided that the time is ripe for the Canadian Government to consider a comprehensive policy and to undertake definite and extended measures likely to operate toward the encouragement, improvement and development of the industry as a whole.

As a preliminary to the adoption of any settled policy and in order that the live-stock commissioner may inform himself thoroughly as to the details of the sheep and wool trade in Great Britain and the United States and as to conditions as they actually prevail in Canada, the minister of agriculture has authorized the appointment of a committee of two competent men to investigate the sheep situation in general in the three countries named. At the same time it is the expectation that, without an actual visit, they will gather as much information as possible concerning the trade of the other great sheep-producing countries, in so far as it may be of interest in the development of the industry in Canada. It has been thought advisable to have this committee consist of, in the first place, a wool expert, whose special training has made

may be expected from the development of the sheep industry in Canada, thus commending himself to the attention of the commissioner in connection with the appointment to the committee. It is felt that Mr. Ritch will be able to place such information at the disposal of the minister, his officers and of all interested in sheep breeding in this country as is likely to be particularly valuable in the furtherance of the scheme for the up-building of the industry which is now in contemplation.

The other member of the committee, W. A. Dryden, is very well known to the stock breeders of Canada. The present owner of Maple Shade has fallen heir to many of the qualities which gave his father so large an influence in his own province, and, although as yet a comparatively young man, has acquired a knowledge of the stockman's art which has already brought him to the fore amongst Canadian breeders. Mr. Dryden's collegiate and agricultural education has been such as to bring him into demand in a more or less public way, and in recent years he had been about Canada a good deal in connection with judging and other work under the supervision of the live-stock branch. Mr. Dryden's judgment is practical, and his recognized popularity speaks well for the confidence which may be expected from his fellow breeders in his ability to perform, with credit to himself and them, the work which he has now undertaken. In combining the services upon this committee of a practical sheep man with that of a technical expert the department has reason to believe that the problems of production and of marketing both as regards wool and mutton, will be studied and discussed in such close relationship that the results of the inquiry will most successfully serve the purpose for which it is undertaken.

After consultation with the live-stock commissioner the members of the committee have, of course, been allowed the liberty of depending largely upon their own initiative in planning their route and in evolving the details of their investigations. The general procedure will, however, be somewhat as follows: Mr. Ritch preceded Mr. Dryden to England, in order to attend a number of important wool fairs, in progress during August and September. There he will be in close association with wool merchants and with men interested or engaged in the woollen trade in its several branches, and will thus be enabled to discuss with them in all its phases the various details of the industry in connection with both home and foreign markets.

Both members of the committee are arranging to be present at the big late summer and autumn sheep sales, which are annually held in the latter part of August, during September and in October. They will visit Smithfield and the larger meat markets of London and of other important cities. It is possible also that they will be present at the annual ram sales at Kelso, and at one or two other leading centers. This will bring them into intimate touch with sheep breeders, mutton raisers, dealers, butchers and provision men in all the important localities. It will give them an insight into conditions and methods as they prevail upon the farms throughout the country. It will direct attention to the systems of marketing in operation in every stage of the business. It will furnish them with information concerning prices, profits and as to the extent and nature of the trade, and, in short, give them a knowledge of the great sheep industry of the United Kingdom and of the import trade in dead mutton and lamb. It is hoped that the investigations in Great Britain will put the branch in possession of such information and of such facts and statistics as may enable it to intelligently assist in building up a great Canadian business in the raising of sheep, and also in finding a place for the Canadian products of wool and mutton in the commerce of the world.

Returning to Canada, the investigators will visit all the provinces and interview prominent sheep men and manufacturers in order to familiarize themselves with the difficulties, draw-



YEARLING TAMWORTH SOW

him familiar with all the technical and practical phases of wool markets and woollen manufacture in the United Kingdom and Canada, and in the second place, a capable Canadian sheep breeder whose experience has given him a somewhat extended knowledge of sheep farming in this country. These gentlemen have already been appointed and are at present pursuing their investigations in Great Britain. The personnel of the committee consists of W. T. Ritch, of Manchester, England, and of W. A. Dryden, of Brooklin, Canada.

Mr. Ritch, though perhaps unknown to the members of the Sheep Breeders' Association, has had familiar and honorable relationship with trades people in Canada for a period of years, having represented while in this country certain English cloth manufacturers, whose interests he served efficiently and acceptably. Mr. Ritch's experience has made him thoroughly familiar with the woollen industry in England and Scotland, with the wool markets and manufacturing districts of that country, and has besides given him a general knowledge of the woollen trade, including that in staple and shoddy articles and in the manufactured product, both of England and America. He has visited also in a business capacity Australia and New Zealand, and had made careful observations concerning the growing and marketing of wool in these two countries. Combined with his technical knowledge Mr. Ritch has acquired a practical understanding of the growing and handling of wool on the farm, and together with this has evidenced an enthusiastic and intelligent comprehension of what