

FARMING

VOL. XVI

APRIL 4th, 1899

No. 31

Saw It in "Farming"

COBourg, March 25th, 1899.

DEAR SIRs,—With pleasure I enclose \$1, my subscription for 1899 I am coming west this week to buy some purebred cattle that were brought to my notice by your paper.

Yours truly,
A. J. RUSSELL.

Agricultural News and Comments

The United States is making rapid progress as an exporter of poultry to Great Britain. Kansas and Ohio are the chief sources of supply.

It is reported that a new company has been formed in Virginia with a capital of \$100,000,000, with the avowed intention of cornering the export beef trade.

A good motto for the farmer to have in mind as spring approaches is "A little farm well tilled, etc." There is often a rush on the part of the farmer to get through with his seeding operations too soon. No greater mistake than this could be made or that of putting in the crop with the land only half prepared for it.

The importation of poultry from the continent to Great Britain is reported to be declining. Canada, the United States, and Australia are each year sending more and more of this product. As we have frequently pointed out, this trade is growing in importance every year in so far as Canada is concerned, and our poultry raisers should make a particular note of this fact.

In Great Britain compensation has been allowed in cases where pigs are destroyed on account of swine fever since November, 1893, and the average yearly amount spent on this and for administration amounts to £190,000 per annum. This is rather a serious item, and if similar compensation were allowed in cases where cattle were destroyed because of tuberculosis the annual expenditure would be enormous.

It is said that expanding ammonia or carbonic acid forms a good means of cooling the air in a dwelling in hot weather. For this purpose ammonia is better suited and is cheaper than carbonic acid. In an ammonia-cooling machine the gas is compressed and cooled by water to a temperature below its critical point; it is thus liquefied, and, when allowed to expand, it becomes very cold, and may be made to cool the air directly.

The largest frozen-meat factory in the world is near Buenos Ayres, South America. The establishment is capable of an output of 3,500 sheep per day, or 100,000 mutton carcasses per month. The freezing rooms have a capacity of nearly 100,000 cubic feet, and have hanging room for 6,000 sheep. The store rooms, in which the sheep are stored after freezing to await shipment, have a capacity of 150,000 cubic feet, and can contain upwards of 50,000 sheep.

The paucity of cold storages in St. Petersburg and the almost entire lack of Baltic trading vessels fitted up with cold storage facilities have seriously injured the condition of the poultry and game shipped from some parts of Russia to Great Britain during the mild season of February. It is now clear that if Russia wishes to compete with other countries in this trade she will have to have a complete system of cold storage similar to that in operation in Canada.

The black faced mountain sheep of Scotland have several sterling qualities. They are hardy to a degree, thriving on the sparse herbage of the mountain side, where English sheep could not exist. Their mutton is of exceedingly high qualities, and the ewes prove excellent mothers. Since the great liver-rot, about twenty years ago, these sheep have been brought to England for breeding purposes. Many farmers in the northern and midland counties of England cross the mountain sheep ewes with border Leicester rams, and thus some very good, fat lambs are produced. One drawback of the mountain sheep is that they do not cut much wool.

Selecting Seeds

One of the important tasks which every farmer has to perform as seed time approaches is that of selecting good seed. In no small measure the result of the crop depends upon a wise selection of seed. To prepare a field and get it into a perfect state of tillage and then sow it with an inferior quality of seed is simply an absurd policy to follow. Yet there are many farmers guilty of just such practices as this, and if when harvest approaches the crop is a failure they wonder what is the matter. In rearing cattle or any other kind of stock, good feeding and good breeding must go hand in hand. And so with growing grain, good seeding or providing good seed and good tillage and cultivation must go hand in hand. When both these are provided, and the land is in good condition as regards a sufficient supply of plant foods, an abundant crop is almost sure unless the elements over which the farmer has no control are very much against him.

A good way to examine seed is with a small magnifying glass. With this instrument the outside characteristics of the seeds, such as the size, color and broken grains, can easily be detected, and if there is a very large proportion of these inferior seeds the whole lot should be discarded and a better quality substituted. In no case should small or undeveloped seeds be sown. Nature provides that every well-developed seed has within itself a sufficient supply of food to enable it to grow under favorable conditions till it is strong enough to utilize the plant food in the soil around it. A small or undeveloped seed has not so large a supply of this food within itself, and unless the conditions for growth in the soil are exceptionally favorable it will hardly grow at all, and at best will produce a weak and spindly plant. For this and other reasons a shrunken seed is not good.

As the chief substance which the seed takes from the soil in attaining maturity is phosphate it is claimed on good authority that seeds grown on soils deficient in this substance have not within themselves the vitality to reproduce and give a productive crop. This is something for our experiment stations and farmers to work out and test for themselves. For this reason it is a good plan for the farmer, if his land is deficient in phosphates, to change seed frequently.

Of course, no farmer who has any pride in his profession will sow dirty or unclean seed. Weeds are plentiful enough on most of our farms without having the number increased by sowing dirty seed. Sometimes it may be difficult without a careful examination of the seed to detect any foreign matter as would be the case with wild oats in regular oat seed. Then there are the smaller weed seeds in the grain that sometimes cannot be detected unless a close examina-