

Items in Stock Raising.

BY A STOCKMAN.

The length and severity of last winter should impress upon our minds more strongly than ever the importance of the haying season, as our success in the hay field will govern the number and condition of our stock next winter. The number of men employed and the quantity of snap they possess, the character of the implements used, the time and condition of cutting, etc., all govern our profits in beefing and dairying.

Last winter was just as trying on the stock as on the owners, and you should now consider how the repetition of such loss and inhumanity can be avoided in future. Many of you have the habit of writing to the agricultural papers giving your experience of your successes; now, be just and write up the losses you have sustained by your mismanagement. Cast away old methods and old ideas, and adopt systems which are in harmony with the times. Banish the practice of ruining your pastures and your stock by the ruthless system of banishing your cattle upon frozen grass, taking no more heed of them until the ground is hidden in the snows of autumn.

The animal heat must be sustained before you can receive any returns from your stock, and this is maintained first by proper feeding and second by good stabling. If you only knew how much food was required merely to maintain the animal, and then compare it with the quantity of food given, you would soon be able to calculate how many of your animals you are feeding at a loss. It has been estimated that two-thirds of the food given are required for maintenance, and one-third for profit, that is, when the animal is liberally fed, so that no profits can be obtained by feeding a two-thirds ration, and the whole food is consequently wasted, or more than wasted, for the animal is constantly depreciating in value. In the same manner your profits are lessened in winter by inefficient stabling, producing inefficient warmth, which is as deleterious to your profits as inefficiency of food.

It is notorious that too many of you enter the winter with too many animals on your hands; or rather you have more animal life than you have food to sustain, and then you boast to your neighbors that you have wintered so many scare-crows on such a small quantity of food; or, what is just as bad, you congratulate yourself that you have brought so much stock through the winter without buying a single dollar's worth of food! You imagine you have saved money by making your stock pick up and eat every straw on the dung hill, and possibly also a large quantity of the dung itself. The grass is to make amends for all this, but you find that just as the stock begins to get into condition, and the cows commence to yield a profitable flow of milk, then the pasture is bare, either by drought or over-stocking, and the loss then sustained not being made up by the autumn pastures, relief is sought in mortgaging the farm.

Let us suppose that your stock consists of dairy cows, the choice of which sold here (Grey

County) last spring at \$45 to \$60, this margin being due more to the condition of the cows than to the breed; then say 15 cows at an average of \$50 would bring \$750, while if you wintered 20 scare-crow cows on the same food, they would be dear at \$25 each, or \$500 in all, making a clear loss of \$250—all owing to miscalculation. This clearly proves that you would have saved \$250 by making a present of five cows to some poor immigrant neighbor in the month of October. So much for feeding twenty cows with the food that properly belongs to fifteen. But this is only the annual loss sustained by feeding cows; such farmers generally lose proportionately as much in most of the other branches of their business, and they have a sort of a remote idea that farming "doesn't pay." If such farming is able to sustain such losses for many years in succession, then there must be a bonanza in good farming. So there is.

Some farmers farm entirely for pleasure, and calculate to lose money on their operations; but the farmer I have just described has his mind bent entirely upon making money; he will cast a dollar into the fire, if by doing so he can save a penny. The shrewd farmer saves both the dollar and the penny, as well as the interest on both, and many other pickings besides; but the question may arise whether it is better to sell or give away the five cows or purchase food for them. This will depend upon circumstances in each particular case; such for example as the stabling accommodation and comforts, prices of food, convenience to markets, etc.; but in each case it must be remembered that if it will not pay to buy feed for stock, it will not pay to feed the food raised on the farm, making allowance, of course, for the expense of hauling from the market place. It is no disgrace for a farmer to run short of feed and be compelled to buy; it is usually better to do so than to have feed to sell in the spring. The true principle to follow is to feed correct rations all the year round, the matter of buying or selling being a secondary consideration.

I have recently heard of several instances in which farmers have lost quite a number of their stock from starvation; one is reported to have lost \$500 worth; another three cows and a horse; and several around here have lost one or more cows from weakness at calving time. The condition of the remaining stock can easily be imagined from these facts, and it is quite probable that quite an additional number will perish on the early grass. One man who owns 300 acres of land is purchasing hay for 300 head of stock. One would think that domestic animals were given us for abuse, not for use, and such owners certainly offend against the moral, if not the civil law. If "a merciful man is kind to his beasts," what must be said concerning the man I have described? It is my opinion that fully one-half of the farmers in this section would be liable to punishment under the act for the prevention of cruelty to animals.

I once read in an English paper an account of a farmer in Kent who attempted to winter his sheep, numbering about 300 head, on wheat straw as their only food. The shepherd complained to his master that the sheep were dying,

and could not possibly live on this diet, to which the latter replied that he could not help it, and that he was not able to purchase food for them. The farmer was ultimately brought before the magistrate under the act for the prevention of cruelty to animals and committed to jail for six months. The magistrate commented very severely on the case, remarking that the flockmaster must either provide proper food for his herd, or, if unable to do so, he must dispose of them in some humane manner. What sort of a figure would we cut in this country should such a law be enforced here? I fear all the jails in Ontario could not contain us all.

Another word with regard to temperature. One day in March, while thinking over the subject, I took a thermometer from the woodshed, the temperature standing exactly at zero, and placed it in a stable which contained five yearlings, and a cow in a loose box, fixing it behind the centre beast about five feet from the floor. It soon rose 12°, when I turned out one yearling (the one next the door), and in a few minutes the thermometer dropped two degrees. I then turned out another, and in a few minutes it fell two degrees lower. After a while I turned out all the others, and in an hour the thermometer stood at zero again. It therefore follows that animals should be packed as closely together as possible, providing the temperature is regulated by proper ventilation. The animals in winter should be provided with heat producing food; the water and stables should be properly tempered, say about 60°, and the temperature of the stable should never fall below 40°.

There is nothing like feeding for a definite purpose. Don't imagine that everything eaten is not wasted. The greatest possible waste can accrue by feeding improper rations, especially when the injury inflicted upon the animal is included in the calculation. Farmers are too undecided as to what purpose their young animals should be devoted. This decision should be made at the birth of the animal, and the feeding and management should be regulated accordingly. A knowledge of the ancestry will teach you whether the calf is adapted to milk, butter, cheese or beef. In any case the animal must be liberally fed, but the nature of the food will be different in each case. If you feed for early maturity, beefing animals will stand stimulating food which would injure young cattle intended for dairy purposes. The same principles and cautions will apply to the management of all our domestic animals. By following these rules you will always have valuable and saleable stock, which will add pleasure as well as profit to your business. Consider what your forte is, both with regard to the bent of your mind and the nature of your conditions, and make that line of business your specialty.

Now there are thousands of farmers who follow a different system to the one I have indicated. Why don't they come forward and defend themselves? Why don't the feeders of scare-crows give some reasons for the faith that is in them, if they have any faith in their system? The fact of the matter is that these items, or any others of the kind, will not reach