

work. No business man ever succeeded in that way.

The Decadence of the Fair System.

Our short article on this subject some weeks ago seems to have touched a responsive chord. Since then several letters have been received from correspondents discussing the advisability of doing away with many of the local fairs, and only holding fairs at a few leading central points; these we have published in *FARMING*. A decided change seems to have come over the sentiment of our people in regard to the holding of local fairs. While local agricultural shows served a good purpose when first organized, we believe that their usefulness has to a certain extent died out. All the purposes for which the local township fairs were first organized, would be realized by combining a number of them into county or district shows. Railway facilities are so good now, and the rates are so low that every farmer, if he wishes, can spend a day or two at a leading fair. In fact, it is true that nearly every farmer visits some one of the leading shows every year, even though he has his township fair at his own door. On that score there does not appear to be any valid reason for continuing so many local shows.

One of the strong reasons urged by some of our correspondents, why the local show should be kept up, is that the farmer who has good stock, will have an opportunity of exhibiting it. But why would not a good county or district show give him the same opportunity? As is pointed out by another correspondent, nearly every exhibitor who has really good stock, makes a practice of exhibiting at several of the local shows, which costs him as much, if not more than it would to exhibit at one really good exhibition, and we are sure that he would lose a great deal more time. Besides, honors won at a larger show are of more value to the winner than the several prizes at a local township show. At a good county or district show the prizes would be much larger, especially if all the moneys put into the local shows were given to the larger show, and would be worth competing for. On the other hand, under the present method of dividing the grants among a number of small fairs, the prizes are hardly worth striving for. Concentration of effort along this line would therefore be very beneficial in many ways.

That many of the local fairs have degenerated is evidenced by the fact that it has been found necessary to have special legislation enacted to prevent gambling and every kind of fakir business at country shows. The local agricultural fair has been looked upon by all kinds of games of chance men as their particular property, and the proposed legislation introduced by the Ontario Minister of Agriculture will be heartily welcomed. It might be as well to go still further and include all fairs and exhibitions. Games, and fakir business, whether indulged in at country or city fairs should be put a stop to.

The local agricultural fair, no doubt, has many advocates, yet we believe that the time and money expended in conducting them could be used to much better advantage if combined into a good county or district fair. We mention district fair because it would not be advisable at all times to limit a fair to county lines. Let the local fairs in any district choose some central point easy of access, where they may unite and organize a good show, and we are sure that after a year or two no one would think of going back to the old township fair.

No Sheep Scab in Canada.

In a recent issue of the *Australasian* published at Melbourne, Australia, the following extraordinary item appears:

"A letter has been received by the Minister of Agriculture from the Minister of Agriculture of New South Wales, stating that it was intended to import some sheep from Vermont, in the eastern part of the United States, and inquiring if there would be any objection offered to their being brought here, seeing that they would have to travel through Canada, where the dreaded scab disease exists, in order to reach Vancouver, the port of shipment. Mr. Taverner has

asked the chief inspector of stock for a report on the matter, but at the same time he is by no means favorable to the proposal, having a lively recollection of the havoc the disease caused among the flocks in Victoria years ago."

How such an entirely erroneous impression could have got so far away in regard to the prevalence of sheep scab in Canada is hard to say. We can assure our Australian friends that there is not the least possible danger that any importations of sheep they may make from the United States through Canada will come in contact with the "dreaded scab disease." We hardly believe it exists in Canada to-day, and at present do not know of a single case. The very fact that Canadian sheep breeders are every day shipping sheep for breeding purposes to the United States is a strong evidence that no contagious or virulent disease exists among Canadian flocks. There is really more danger from sheep scab in sending importations through the western States than through western Canada, as the disease is prevalent in some districts in the western States.

That December Wheat Deal.

A glaring instance of the gross injustice being done every day to both the producer and consumer by uncalled for speculation in food products is shown by the big December wheat deal. The principal parties in this deal appear to be Joseph Lieter, an Eastern speculator, and Philip D. Armour, of "packing-house" fame. The former was the purchaser for December delivery, while the latter was a large seller for such delivery. It was never expected when the deal, covering over 6,000,000 bushels of December wheat, was made a few months ago between these two manipulators that the wheat would ever be delivered. The former fully expected to see the great Chicago packer "cornered" and compelled to divulge some of his millions. But the unexpected has happened, and by a most extraordinary application of skill and push, Armour has delivered his 6,000,000 bushels or has it ready in his warehouses in Chicago, for delivery. This large supply has been purchased at Duluth, Minneapolis and western points and delivered at Chicago during the last few weeks, when Armour found out that he would be forced to produce the wheat or give up some of his wealth. No one is more surprised than the person who will receive the delivery of this large quantity of wheat.

Why such a manipulation of a food product, necessary for the existence of mankind, should be allowed is difficult to understand. Though the deal, as finally consummated, may appear to be a genuine business transaction, yet at the beginning it was nothing more or less than "dealing in futures." The deal will be of no practical benefit to either the farmers who produced the wheat, or to the persons who will consume it. The wheat has only been transferred from one manipulator to another, and it is hard to say when it will reach the consumer. In the natural course of events a rise in the price of wheat might be looked for just now if it were not for this uncertain element. The strife between the "bulls" and the "bears" still goes on. The latter element will be striving just now to keep the price down so that the man who holds this large wheat supply will be compelled to give up some of his wealth.

English Sheep Sales.

We give below by permission of Mr. W. W. Chapman, Live Stock agent, Fitzallan house, Arundel street, Strand, London, England, the following interesting tables concerning the English sheep sales of the present year. Nearly 2,000 returns were tabulated to get these tables. The value of such tables both for conciseness and ease of understanding, will be greatly appreciated by our breeders. They will readily see how the highest and lowest prices obtained by each breed in 1897, compare with those obtained in 1896. A table is also given showing the highest and lowest averages for individual animals during the two years.

COMPARATIVE TABLE OF PRICES 1896 and 1897.

Breed	1896.		1897.	
	Highest.	Lowest.	Highest.	Lowest.
Leicester	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Cotswold	19 8 6	75 12 0	5 5 0	6 16 6
Lincoln	29 8 0	26 5 0	5 5 0	5 5 0
Oxford	367 10 0	231 0 0	5 10 0	4 4 0
Shropshires	131 5 0	89 5 0	5 5 0	4 14 6
Southdowns	173 5 0	194 5 0	4 16 6	2 12 6
Wensleydale	96 12 0	37 11 0	3 3 0	2 2 0
Border Leicester	12 0 0	21 0 0	2 16 0	2 5 0
Kent or Romney Marsh	210 0 0	100 0 0	5 0 0	5 0 0
Cheviots	37 16 0	48 6 0	3 5 0	3 0 0
Devon Longwool	47 0 0	99 15 0	9 12 0	5 13 6
South Devons	23 2 0	21 0 0	5 0 0	5 13 6
Black-face Mountain	25 0 0	24 13 6	8 0 0	3 0 0
	120 0 0	100 0 0		4 0 0

RAM LAMBS.

Breed.	1896.		1897.	
	Highest.	Lowest.	Highest.	Lowest.
Cotswold	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Oxford	13 13 6	11 0 0	6 2 0	3 13 6
Shropshires	22 1 0	24 3 0	3 3 0	3 3 0
Southdowns	8 18 6	9 19 6	4 4 0	6 0 0
Hampshires (letting)	15 4 6	12 12 0	1 11 6	2 2 0
Hampshires (sold)	71 10 0	65 0 0	5 5 0	9 9 0
Suffolk	42 0 0	42 0 0	2 12 6	2 0 0
Wensleydale	46 4 0	46 4 0	2 12 6	2 12 6
Border Leicester	11 0 0	11 0 0	2 15 0	2 15 0
Black-face Mountain	8 0 0	8 0 0	4 5 0	4 5 0
	13 0 0	13 0 0	3 0 0	3 0 0

COMPARATIVE TABLE OF AVERAGES FOR 1896 and 1897.

SHEARLING RAMS.

Breed.	1896.		1897.	
	Highest.	Lowest.	Highest.	Lowest.
Leicester	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Cotswold	10 15 0	12 0 0	5 7 6	6 0 0
Lincoln	10 11 0	10 14 0	6 10 0	6 9 6
Oxford	102 4 0	81 12 9	3 16 0	1 5 0
Shropshire	12 11 0	17 19 0	5 5 0	4 0 4
Southdowns	39 9 8	27 1 0	5 0 0	2 2 0
Wensleydale	18 18 0	12 4 6	3 14 0	2 5 6
Border Leicester	8 0 0	8 0 0	7 0 0	6 2 0
Kent or Romney Marsh	35 12 6	35 0 0	10 0 4	4 0 0
Cheviots	22 0 0	15 10 6	4 2 6	3 10 2
Black-faced Mountain	14 7 4	23 17 0	7 3 0	2 5 11
	31 16 0	27 8 0	5 7 0	4 0 0

RAM LAMBS.

Breed.	1896.		1897.	
	Highest.	Lowest.	Highest.	Lowest.
Cotswold	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Oxford	7 16 0	7 0 0	6 2 0	5 13 6
Shropshires	8 3 0	9 0 0	4 4 0	3 17 0
Southdowns	7 6 1	4 4 0	2 12 6	4 4 0
Hampshire (letting)	7 4 8	7 16 0	3 15 8	1 15 0
Hampshire (selling)	34 2 6	34 2 6	10 16 1	10 16 1
Suffolks	15 18 6	13 13 0	7 0 0	5 2 0
Wensleydale	3 0 0	3 0 0	1 0 0	1 0 0
Border Leicester	4 17 0	4 17 0	1 0 0	1 0 0
Black-faced Mountain	5 9 9	5 6 6	2 11 7	2 11 7

The Farmers' Institute Report.

The annual report of the Superintendent of Farmers' Institutes for the year 1896-7 has just been issued, and is full of useful information. The tables compiled from the returns sent in by the secretaries of the various institutes should be of great interest, as showing the relative standing of each institute and of the work they are doing. From these tables we see that South Grey had the largest attendance, there being a total of 4,240 at the five meetings held by the institute. The next largest total attendance was in East Peterborough, where 3,895 attended at the six meetings held in that riding. The total attendance throughout the province was 125,177.

The institute in South Waterloo had the largest membership, 465, while North Hastings and North Lanark had 390 each. The lowest membership was that of East Algoma, 16. Valuable papers are given on such subjects as: Corn and the silo, clover growing, wheat growing, underdraining, weeds, mixed farming, special farming, dairying, farm barns, tuberculosis, diseases of cattle, beef cattle, the bacon hog, care of sheep, horse breeding, dairying, winter dairying, breeding, feeding and rearing dairy stock, fruit culture, and the farmer's small fruit garden. Most instructive articles on forest tree life, by W. T. Macoun and others, are also given. The poultry side of farm work is not forgotten, for there are some half-dozen good articles on this subject. Prof. Panton gives a comprehensive paper on injurious insects, and several good articles on fish culture bring the report to a close. It should be in the hands of every farmer.