

SHEEP WASHING.

The methods usually adopted for washing sheep depend upon the means at hand to the individual farmer. A thorough washing is, however, of great importance, for upon a proper performance of this operation depends greatly the value of our wool as a marketable commodity. It is often done in a very hasty and inefficient manner. I have seen a flock of sheep driven three or four miles along a dusty road, penned in on the banks of the Grand River (where the current is very strong, taken out one by one, shoved into the water, and after being turned over by a man standing in the river, and slightly rubbed, a lowed to swim ashore and go off again along the dirty high road.

A roomy pond of clear stagnant water is preferable to a running stream. The water is usually softer, and the yoke or oil which is supposed to be forced through the wool by insensible perspiration, being of a very soapy nature, causes the wash to act more effectually. In running streams this soap is carried away with each sheep, and the water remains clear from first to last.

The sheep owing to the weight of fleece on its back, is in its normal state hot at all times, and particularly so in the end of May. A sudden plunging into cold water is therefore a very severe shock. The water in a stagnant pond, or in one formed by draining a creek has a chance of being well warmed before use, and this is another point in its favor.

Perhaps the most effectual plan is to combine these several ways. Let the sheep be seized by the fore-legs, and passed to a man standing in the stagnant and warm water. He should turn the animal in every direction; should squeeze out the wool well with his hand, and pass it on to one who is placed below, either in running water or under a shoot.

After two or three have been washed, we have good soapy water, which will far more effectually soften the wool and loosen all impurities, than will clear hard water; and these impurities will be entirely removed by a final immersion in the running stream. Moreover, the stagnant water being warm, will prepare the animal's body gradually for the colder, and will go away with that shock to the system caused by a sudden immersion of the sheep, which has swayed under the combined influence of a May sun and its own struggles with its captor.

All burr and tenacious impurities should be carefully and thoroughly removed, and the offensive matter collected round the anus, may, when thus softened, be drawn from the wool, thus saving many pounds of wool in a flock from the process of tagging at shearing time.

A clean pasture, and if possible a clean road to pasture should be provided until after shearing. The former is most necessary: for when the dews are heavy, if there be a patch of bare ground in the field, there will the sheep be found lying at night.

So important, indeed, has the subject of thorough cleansing of the fleece before shearing been considered by large breeders that some years ago the farming Society of Ireland recommended the use of a large tub of water warmed to blood heat, in which to place the sheep till the wool be well softened, and then to river wash, on the ground that "keeping the animal in cold water a sufficiently long time to wash thoroughly endangers its health; that fleeces

of a close pile can not be cleansed by the usual mode of washing, and that the extra labour required to wash sheep in tubs of warm water should be amply repaid, were the washings in these tubs carried out and applied as manure, the quantity of rich animal soap, which they contain making it one of the most fertilizing applications which can possibly be used."

It is better to allow a full week to elapse before shearing. The wool will then if it has been fine, be thoroughly dried, and some time is necessary for the oil or yolk to ascend from the body into the wool, by which the weight of the fleece is increased, and by which a great deal of softness and elasticity is imparted to the marketable wool.

C. E. W. in *Globe*.

RENNET.

At a recent meeting of the National Dairymen's Club, held in Utica, the subject of discussion being "rennet," Mr H. Lewis, of Frankfort, spoke as follows:—

We often speak of the agents employed in cheese making, and by common consent designate heat, rennet, acid and salts, as the agents employed in changing milk into cheese.

Again, we speak of cooking cheese and scalding cheese, at a degree of temperature below that of blood heat.

Rennet is in fact the only agent employed in changing milk into cheese, and the quality of the cheese from first to last depends entirely upon the milk used, the rennet employed as the agent, and the degree of skill used by the cheesemakers.

This may look to some at first sight like whittling cheesemaking down to a small point indeed; and so it is, when we consider the fact that success in cheese making depends upon our strict attention, and at the proper time, to all the minutia of the business.

Again, cheese making is the most difficult, the most perplexing, the most recondite of all trades or occupations.

Notwithstanding this, success in cheese making depends upon three things, as I said before, *pure milk, good rennet, and a keener cheese maker*.

I have named three things in the order of their importance. We sometimes find cheese of the finest quality made by persons without skill; but with all the skill in the world concentrated in one person, we could not expect cheese of the best quality produced from bad milk and bad rennet.

If I am correct in placing rennet second in importance in cheesemaking, every dairyman must realize the advantage gained by preserving and preparing rennet for use in cheese-making, in its purity.

Heat accelerates the action of the rennet, and cold and salt retard its action; but from the moment of its introduction into the milk its work begins, and we first discover its work in coagulation, then in a continual hardening of the curd, by which the whey is rejected, and going on with its silent but important work in the cheese until that is brought to a state of ripeness which cheese must acquire to render it one of the best, and one of the cheapest, as well as one of the most nutritious articles of food.