

The Farming World

For Farmers and Stockmen

Vol. XX.

JUNE 17th, 1902.

No. 23

Try Something New.

THE charge has been made that farmers are too prone to get into a rut in their way of doing things. Is this charge true? Do farmers do the same thing in the same way year after year from force of habit without any thought of a better and more economical way of doing it? We are afraid that in a good many instances the charge is true. The conditions and environment of the farm are such that one is apt to get into a rut before he knows it and to continue in that rut in the vain belief that his method is the very best that could be devised. A good way to force one's self out of a rut is to try a small experiment or a new way of doing things each year. If for instance you have got into a rut in your way of feeding, try one or two animals on a new plan and watch the result. Some new kind of grain or some new method of preparing the soil, if tried even in a small way, will tend to get one out of himself and to broaden his ideas and methods. Of course an old and oft-repeated way of doing things if it produces the best possible results should not be discarded. But habit is so powerful one often does things in the same way over and over again, even when one knows that it is not the best way. This habit should be guarded against by every farmer as it will impede progress and prevent him from realizing the most out of his work and his farm. By planning to try some one new thing every year, even if it be on ever so small a scale, will help to keep him out of the ruts that are too frequently followed upon many a farm.

Early Maturity in Live Stock.

One of the striking features in live stock breeding to-day is early maturity. In nearly all classes; including horses, cattle, sheep and swine, maturity is reached at a much earlier stage than twenty-five or even fifteen years ago. The aim seems to be to cut down the time it takes to bring an animal to a condition when it may be useful for food or for some other purpose. This means a saving in the cost of production and does not interfere with quality; in fact quality in most cases is improved.

All this is indicative of progress—progress in breeding, progress in feeding and in caring for the young animals properly. To secure early maturity the farmer must give at-

tention to breeding. It cannot be got by slipshod or careless methods in breeding. The scrub animal will never fill the bill. The early matured animal is only to be found among the pure bred or high grade animals, and even if the breeding has been carefully attended to and the early care and feeding of the animal are neglected, the benefits to be derived from early maturity cannot be secured. To secure, then, this early maturity so essential to the greatest success in live stock husbandry to-day, these two things—breeding and feeding must receive attention.

To many, the part which early maturity plays in horse breeding may not be so apparent as in other lines. It, however, plays a most important part, especially in draft horse breeding. The aim to-day with this class of horses is to secure maturity and large size as quickly as possible. Of course these must not be secured at the expense of quality. But they need not be, and if proper methods are followed in breeding, etc., there need be no sacrifice of quality. In coach horse breeding early maturity is also an important factor. One of the objections to breeding horses especially for remounts, is that the army authorities will not buy the horses until they are at least five or six years old. To breed horses and keep them a year or two longer than the marketable age for most classes and sell them at the prices now being paid for remounts is not the most profitable line of horse breeding to follow. This is the chief objection which the British farmer has to the breeding of horses for army purposes. Five and often six years is too long to wait for returns.

But it is in the breeding and raising of beef cattle that early maturity perhaps plays the most important part. The first essential in profitable cattle breeding to-day is to have the animal grow to a marketable condition as soon as possible. It has been the early maturity of their beef cattle who today market their steers at from one to two years, having in that time attained to the size of three or four-year-olds of the scrub type, that has made the farmers of the Western States so successful as producers of the finest quality of beef. And the Canadian farmer must follow in the same line if he wishes for the same success. Neither the export nor the butchers trade wants the big over-fat and over-age steer. Besides, there

is no profit to the farmer in waiting four or five years for returns from his beef product. Good breeding is essential in securing early maturity and so likewise is good feeding. A calf, no matter how well bred, will not mature early if half starved and neglected in its earlier days. It should be made to grow and lorge ahead right from the beginning. By these two, proper breeding and feeding, the farmer can to-day produce the finest quality of beef at the least possible cost. One could afford to sell an animal matured at two years for almost a third less and make a profit than the animal that takes three or four years to mature. It must be noted, however, that this result cannot be obtained but by a thorough understanding of the laws of breeding and feeding.

There is also a growing tendency to early maturity in raising dairy cattle. The dairy animal like the beef animal is brought to maturity earlier than fifteen or twenty years ago. In the early days the dairy cow did not begin work till three years old at least and sometimes later. To-day in many of the high grade or pure bred dairy herds the dairy cow begins to give milk a year at least earlier than this period and so science and intelligence are being brought to bear upon all these problems and quicker returns and larger profits are the result.

In sheep rearing early maturity should play and is playing a most important part, especially for mutton purposes. In fact, it is only by developing this to the largest extent that the greatest profits can be realized from sheep-rearing to-day. This may be seen in the market for early lambs. In the United States the greatest profits that many sheep raisers have is in raising winter lambs. These bring enormously high prices and if proper accommodation is provided, can be reared without any great difficulty. And a breed or class of sheep that will mature early is best adapted for the purpose. In Canada we have not the market for this early high priced stuff that the American farmer has. But there is a demand for it which might be increased if more attention were given to breeding and raising lambs for it. Aside from this, profitable mutton-making in this or any other country can only be most successfully carried on by attention to early maturity.

There is only left the hog to deal with. What relation does early maturity bear to it? A most important relation, we think. Ex-