

Pointers on Bacon Hogs, Picked Up at Brantford Fat Stock Show.

To the Editor FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

SIR,—I think I would be correct in making the statement that more general interest was taken in the exhibit of bacon type hogs than was shown in any other section of the great fair just closed. Ontario farmers, and especially those making a specialty of swine breeding and feeding, are fully alive to the fact that "this bacon business," as they term it, is becoming more than a passing craze for something new. Consequently, those who have not been raising the hog of the day are wisely adjusting their breeding operations to suit changed trade conditions.

A pertinent question crops up just here. One of our foremost breeders of "up-to-date bacon hogs" put it to me thus: "Where is the utility of our farmers and breeders seeking to evolve, through the comparatively slow process of selection, breeding and feeding, a type of hogs suitable for this business, but differing widely from the foundation stock, when we have now existing one or more strains which fill the bill almost perfectly?" There is a measure of truth in the contention, "There is also a pig of a different color." Partiality for old-time favorite breeds is hard to overcome, even though there may be dollars in so doing. Evolution after a system may, within the next few years, give us widely different types of Bershires, Yorkshires and other leading breeds. Let us consider carefully ere we entirely remodel typical characteristics of any of our present breeds. May they not each have a certain place in our practice?

Killing Test.—This was, without doubt, the best number on a good programme. So far as one demonstration carries weight, it went to show that no breed has a monopoly of desirable bacon type. Further, animals alive and dead did not occupy the same relative place of merit. Evidently, external conformation is not a guarantee of quality in the curing-room. We were given to understand that animals which stood at the top alive dropped four or five places after killing. Marketing our hogs alive, as wanted, how shall we determine when we have just the right thing? The practical talks by expert packers given on the animals slaughtered, with the why and wherefore of decisions given, were splendid educators. We need more of these *practical lessons* at our shows. Many farmers expressed regret that the slaughtering had not been done by experts from one of the packing houses. In conversation with a number of exhibitors, they informed me that they would be very loath to dispense with corn in producing bacon pigs. They agreed that it should be withheld during the first three months of growth. Afterwards, fed to the extent of one-half the meal ration, satisfactory results were obtained in every instance.

As to *clover pasture* as a supplement to a moderate grain ration, it is desirable in reducing cost of production and maintaining hogs in vigor; as a complete ration, in the opinion of our packers it is a failure. They simply do not want "grass-fed" hogs at any price, since their bacon is liable to be soft and inferior quality generally. The packers object very strongly to farmers forcing their hogs along to reach the desired weight of 180 pounds at 5½ to 6 months, as so many are doing. They contend that the immature bacon so produced is the *real* of the bacon trade, and as such is not wanted. On the other hand, our farmers will not care to carry their pigs to 9½ months (the required age) to make the weight that could be reached three months before.

For some time past the packers have been making their requirements known to the farmer, and rightly so. Now it is the farmer's turn. He demands that the present system of "pooling" hogs at a certain price for all-comers is unjust, since it places no premium upon the bacon hog. Just so soon as local buyers are instructed by their firms to pay for hogs according to a sliding scale of prices, based upon weight and bacon type quality, so soon will an impetus be given to the business. The packers can hardly expect that a few farmers here and there will continue to do missionary work for them unrewarded.

Canadian cheese and butter have an enviable reputation in the markets of Great Britain. There is a large trade in bacon over there. In '96 Britain imported over \$65,000,000 worth of hog products. Of this immense amount Canada supplied about \$6,000,000. Evidently there is ample room for expansion on our part. To secure it we must be prepared to furnish a regular supply of fine quality, for which our customers over the sea are always ready and willing to pay the price.

Leeds Co., Ont.

J. J. FERGUSON.

Nearly two decades of centuries ago the Roman agricultural writers recommended the careful selection of seed wheat, and it is not improbable that such selection was practiced with more care than is the case with many farmers of to-day. Field selection of seed is certainly to be recommended where the vigor and thriftiness of the entire plant can be taken into consideration.

C. C. JAMES, Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Toronto, Ont.: "Please send me one dozen copies Christmas number, with bill for same."

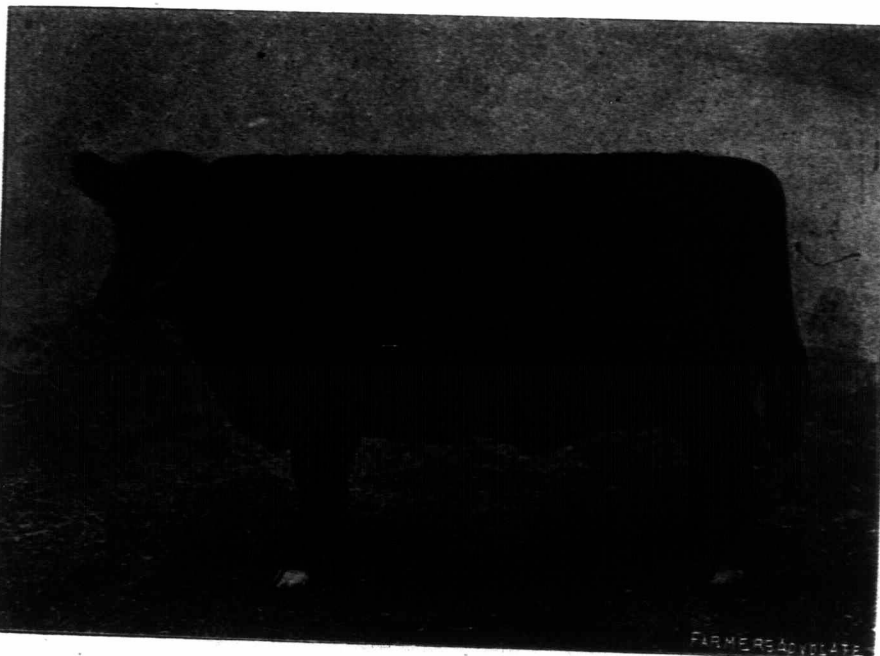
That Tuberculosis Investigation.

SIR,—Those who still believe in the truth of the old adage that "figures cannot lie" must have had their faith rudely shaken when they read in the FARMER'S ADVOCATE of Dec. 1st an article headed "The Tuberculosis Investigation." This article purports to give the gist of a report to the Dominion Department of Agriculture, by Profs. McEachran and Adami, and contains the astounding statement that in the Province of Manitoba the percentage of tuberculous animals found upon testing was 49.22. In other words, practically one-half the number of animals tested had been found tuberculous.

Such a statement issued by authority would lead to the belief that tuberculosis is exceedingly prevalent in this Province, while in the other Provinces the percentages in the same table are comparatively low, ranging from 5.26% in Prince Edward Island to 17.55% in Nova Scotia. The impression thus created that Manitoba is a veritable hotbed of cattle-disease is calculated to do much harm to the Province unless speedily removed, and it is with a view to clearing up the fallacy contained in this published statement that I am induced to set forth the following facts:

The total number of cattle which have been submitted to the tuberculin test in this Province is comparatively small. By far the larger number of these are the dairy cows of the City of Winnipeg. Now, the percentage of reactions in this class of cattle is generally higher than in ordinary farm stock, and we might therefore expect to find a higher percentage for them than for the cattle of the Province as a whole. Such is not the case, however. Through the kindness of Dr. Dunbar, the city veterinarian, I have before me the exact figures covering the tests made by him in the year 1908. The total number of cows he tested was 1,333, and of these 8.6 per cent. reacted. This is a low average for this class of cattle, and so different from the average for the Province that one cannot help wondering where the officials procure their information.

In justice to the Province of Manitoba, Profs.



ABERDEEN-ANGUS HEIFER, JU-JU OF GLAMIS.
CHAMPION OF THE SMITHFIELD SHOW, 1898.

McEachran and Adami should publish full particulars of the number of herds tested, and the number of animals in each which reacted and which did not. If the average of 49.22 is based upon the examination of one or two herds, it is important that the public should know it, as well as the "special reasons for the apparent greater prevalence of the malady" in this Province, which are hinted at but not specified. I am sure the veterinary profession as a whole will support me in stating that the cattle of this Province are as healthy as those in any part of Canada. Tuberculosis is not at all prevalent, and by far the vast majority of the cattle would be found on testing to be perfectly healthy. A few herds have been tested, and in some cases a large number of reactions have been obtained, but the percentage they bear to the cattle of the Province is very small indeed.

Without showing the total number of cattle submitted to the test, tables, such as the one referred to, comparing the percentages of reaction obtained in the various provinces of the Dominion, are worse than useless. They are misleading, and in some quarters where the statements of the Dominion Veterinarian may obtain credence, would create a feeling of mistrust and prejudice against the cattle of this Province most injurious to the interests of our stock breeders.

Winnipeg, Man.

F. TORRANCE.

The Favorite Scotch Crosses.

Direct crosses between the pure-bred polled Angus and Shorthorn cattle are not so largely employed in Scotland as is commonly supposed. The system usually followed is to put a pure-bred bull of either of the breeds mentioned to cross-bred cows in which the blood of the opposite breed is largely represented; in other words, the usual plan is to mate cross-bred cows got by Shorthorn bulls with pure-bred Aberdeen-Angus bulls, or cross-bred cows got by Aberdeen-Angus bulls with pure Shorthorn bulls. Many of the famous blue-grays which come from south of Scotland are, however, direct crosses between pure-bred Shorthorns and Galloways.

Method and Advantages of Dehorning Cattle—Farmers Shipping Their Own Cattle.

To the Editor FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

SIR,—Dehorning steers for feeding purposes seems to be approved of by all those that have tried it in this section. Five years ago a veterinary who dehorned 32 steers for me said that cold would not hurt them if left outside after being dehorned, so I left them out in the cold for about five hours in November. The consequence was that the majority of them suffered a good deal from their heads, and it took them over two weeks to get over it. I do not think it cruel to dehorn if the animals are kept from catching cold. I dehorn in the stall, one man holding the animal, another putting the machine in the proper place and drawing the handles partly closed, the third man catching the tips of the handles and drawing them together. One man cannot make as good a job of it, as the animals are apt to move their heads before he can get to the end of the handles. If the horns are not taken off close to the head the stubs will grow very fast, and the cattle can knock others about, especially if they are fed loose. They are much better dehorned when you are putting them in than to be dehorned a year beforehand. I bought 21 steers at Toronto, averaging over 1,200, all dehorned, a year ago, and fed them loose all together in one place, 60 feet by 20. Some of them would strike hard with the old stubs. Shipping cattle across the ocean and on the cars not dehorned is much more cruel than dehorning, as they are much more comfortable tied by the neck than tied by the horns on the boat, having more freedom, and they ride very quiet on the cars dehorned. They seem to me some dollars a head in better shape than horned cattle when they reach the British market. Last year I fed 17 head on grass. When the weather got cold I could turn them in loose at night, otherwise they would have to be out in the cold, which means a good deal of loss of flesh. I believe loose feeding will take the lead yet, only it takes more bedding. I approve of it as far as I have seen.

With regard to farmers shipping their own cattle to the British market, as compared with consigning them to a commission man to sell for you, my opinion is that the latter plan is no good, as I have tried it twice. Four years ago last May there were about 900 head shipped by farmers in this district, some to London and some to Liverpool. One of my neighbors and I went to London with 200 head, 200 went to Liverpool at the same time, and the balance we shipped later. We were told by the agent that each farmer's cattle would be sold by themselves, but when they had them fixed up for sale the cattle were all mixed. Some of my best steers were put along with a neighbor's best steers. They had them sorted out in that way by a rough guess. If one man's steer weighed about 100 pounds more than the other he got no more for it, as they were sold in bunches at so much per head. When I told them that I was not satisfied, as we were told different, the salesmen said they couldn't do business in that way, but as I had 44 head I got them sold by themselves by being there myself, and they would have been sold for much less had I not interfered. I noticed the buyers don't want to bother with small bunches of ten or twelve head—they like them in large lots best, as a rule. There were four oxen sold together, and after the sale was over we went to the hotel. So the salesman asked me what I thought of the oxen. I said he was the proper one to decide that, so he asked me if there was three pounds difference in the two yoke. I said yes, and more; so he wondered who the best yoke belonged to. I said I didn't know, but the poorest belonged to a neighbor of mine. He said, We will say no more about it, then. So the man with the poorest pair got as much as the owner of the best. So it's rotten all through. The proper way is to consign them to yourself and go with them, or else sell in your own barnyard, which is much better. Most of the shippers are losing more than they make. Even this year some more have tried it, and could have done better at home.

Wellington Co., Ont.

JOHN JONES.

The Qualifications of a Judge.

Mr. Mortimer Levering, of Lafayette, Indiana, in an address delivered at the annual meeting of the New York State Breeders' Association, recently held at Rochester, on "Judging Live Stock in the Showring," after emphasizing the great responsibility of the position, summed up the requirements of a judge as follows: "An eye for symmetry and outline, a fine sense of touch, an education in animal anatomy to detect blemishes, defects and malformation, a complete knowledge of the points of excellence governing the variety under consideration, a mathematical genius for comparing sizes and weights, a cool head and resolute nerve, an unprejudiced mind, the courage of his convictions, unimpeachable integrity, and a disposition to do what is honest and right."