

MR. SMITH—I have put in a second crop of clover with good results. It is the cheapest way to handle a second crop of clover, and the first crop also.

RAISING SHEEP FOR MUTTON.

BY GEO. MCKERROW, WAUKESHA, WIS.

A WIDE RANGE IN PRICES.—If you have noticed the mutton markets for this past six or eight years, as I have done, you will notice that the range of prices quoted in Chicago, New York and other markets has been widening. During the past winter sheep have sold in the stock yards at Chicago, all the way from \$2.00 to \$7.00 per hundred.

Now, is it the Merino sheep that are bringing this seven dollars per hundred? I answer, no. The best lot of Merino wethers that I know of sold in Chicago at about five cents a pound, while I know of two at least, if not more, lots of grade mutton sheep that were sent in from the State of Wisconsin, that have sold for over six cents per pound on that same market. I believe in breeding to a purpose, but as a dairyman breeds up his herd to a Jersey or Guernsey or Holstein standard, so the sheepman can grade up his sheep toward a Down standard or a long wool standard.

SHEEP GIVING GOOD RESULTS.—I meet many sheepmen, and men who are following diversified farming, who have sheep and cows and horses and hogs, and they all tell me that the sheep are and have been giving them as good results for the past two or three years as any of their other stock. I know of but one experiment that has been tried on this side of the Atlantic to find out how cheaply mutton could be produced, and what profit there was in producing mutton, and that was carried on at the Ontario Experiment Farm, under the direction of Prof. Wood, for a period of five years. He experimented with all the pure-breeds; but to bring it down to the practical farmer of Canada, he took the common sheep of the country and gave them one cross with these pure bred animals, feeding them until they were a year old, pasturing them and soiling the carcasses. He did this for five years and then balanced accounts. Following is a summary of the accounts.

THE HALF-BLOOD SOUTHDOWN.—Cost six dollars for its keep, and this included all the items, the shepherd's care and the use of the mother, over and above what her fleece brought in for the year previous. Every item was reckoned in, so that this six dollars is the actual cost of keeping that sheep until he was sold, which was a little over a year old. It shorn six pounds of wool, bringing \$2.40. Its carcass weighed 147 pounds live weight, and sold at 6½ cents a pound, bringing \$10.20, and giving a total profit of \$6.60.

THE HALF-BLOOD SHROPSHIRE.—Cost \$7.00 to keep, shorn nine pounds of wool, which sold at 38 cents a pound, bringing \$3.40. It weighed 160 pounds, live weight, which sold at 6 cents a pound, making a net profit of \$6.32.

THE HALF-BLOOD OXFORD.—Cost \$7.40 to keep, shorn eight pounds of wool, which sold at thirty five cents per pound, bringing \$2.80; weighed 177 pounds, which sold at six cents per pound, bringing \$10.62 or net profit of \$6.02.

THE HALF-BLOOD LEICESTERSHIRE.—Cost \$8.10 to keep, shorn eight pounds of wool, which sold at twenty-eight cents, bringing \$2.24, weighed 198 pounds, which sold at five cents per pound, bringing \$9.90, or net profit of \$4.68.

THE HALF-BLOOD MERINO.—Cost \$5.50 to produce, shorn seven pounds of wool, which sold at thirty two cents per pound, bringing \$2.94; weighed 145 pounds, which sold at five cents a pound, bringing \$7.25, giving a net profit of \$4.04.

THE COMMON GRADE.—The native which was tried side by side with these, cost \$5.00 to keep; it shorn five pounds of

wool, which sold at twenty five cents per pound, bringing \$1.25, weighed 150 pounds, which sold at five cents per pound bringing \$7.50, a net profit of \$3.75.

THE HALF-BLOOD OUTSWOLD.—Cost \$9.31 to produce, shorn nine pounds of wool, which sold for twenty-eight cents per pound, bringing \$2.52, it weighed 199 pounds, which was sold at five cents per pound, bringing \$9.95, giving a net profit of \$3.17.

You see by these experiments that all these sheep paid a profit, and a handsome profit. You can draw your own conclusions regarding breeds. You will see it was not the heaviest shearing sheep that produced the most profit, as there are more things than the weight of the wool or the carcass to be taken into consideration in settling upon a sheep breed.

MUTTON PRODUCED AT A PROFIT.—On this side of the line we can produce mutton at a profit. If you will figure out the cost of some of this mutton, as I have done, you will find that the lowest cost at which any of this mutton was produced was two and two-tenths cents per pound. If we can raise mutton here in Wisconsin at that price, and sell it at six cents per pound, which it has readily brought in Chicago the last year, we are making a good profit.

I, for one, would just as soon try to raise wheat, oats and barley for the straw, as to endeavor to raise sheep for the wool, under existing conditions.

PROFIT IN EARLY LAMBS.—I have some Oxford lambs that were dropped the first week in March, averaging, I think, about twenty-three or twenty-four days old, which weighed, just before I came here, from thirty-two to thirty-three and a half pounds each. The Shropshire lambs are a week younger and weigh from twenty to twenty-two pounds; the Southdowns about the same. As to the breeding qualities of these sheep, I will say we have thirty-eight ewes, and beside them are fifty-four lambs doing well and thriving nicely. I don't know what these lambs are worth now, but lambs that will weigh forty pounds the latter part of March and the first of April have sold readily in our part of the country, other years, to Milwaukee butchers, at from \$3.50 to \$5.50, and sometimes even a little more.

MONEY IN RAISING MUTTON.—I believe it is possible for the farmers of Waukesha County to make some money out of raising mutton, but I believe that we must raise the standard of early maturity, just the same as beef producers and pork producers raise it. I believe we cannot do as we used to do, keep a wether until it is three years old and make his fleece pay for his keep, because every year that we keep him he is going in debt to us, and when we sell him we have to make that up, and it doesn't leave much; but if we will feed from two to fourteen months there is a profit in a well-bred and well-fed lamb.

DISCUSSION.

MR. GORDON.—How can you make the American eat more mutton?

MR. MCKERROW.—Give him better mutton. There is a gentleman sitting in this room who told me he used to be a Merino man and he didn't like mutton. Last summer he got a taste of Down mutton, and he ordered the butcher to bring some more of that kind, and he said he couldn't there wasn't enough in the country.

MR. FLEMING.—Do you think washing wool on sheep practicable?

MR. MCKERROW.—No, sir, I think they should be shorn unwashed.

MR. CLINTON.—Is it possible to pursue sheep husbandry as a specialty on land worth \$100 an acre, and get a decent living, either for wool or mutton, or both?