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TOPICS FOR THE WEEK

Agricultural News and Comments.

Considerable interest is being taken in the system of compressing flour in England. It is now found to be quite feasible to make blocks sufficiently hard and coherent to bear the handling necessary for packing, etc. Compressed flour occupies two-fifths the space of the loose flour, or one-half the space required for flour stored in the ordinary manner in sacks. The flour is easily reduced when once compressed. A small quantity may be easily reduced with a rolling pin or knife. The quality of the flour when compressed for baking, etc., is not injured in any way.

It is wonderful what capabilities the cow has to produce. Last year at the "Hood" Jersey farm in Massachusetts two cows made 655 and 652 pounds of butter each without any forcing. At twenty cents per pound this meant an income of over \$130 each from butter alone. One of these cows gave 12,000 pounds of milk. Though every cow may not do as well as this, if properly selected and fed she will do a great deal more than many dairymen imagine.

The earning of the poultry of the United States last year aggregated \$290,000,000. There are said to be in round numbers 375,000,000 chickens and 40,000,000 other fowls, such as ducks, geese and turkeys, in the United States. In 1897 the hens laid in round numbers 14,400,000,000 eggs. The export price at New York averaged fifteen cents per dozen, which makes the value of the egg crop \$165,000,000. The poultry sold as meat brought \$125,000,000. The hens of America packed inside the shells of their eggs 650,000 tons of water.

Through the efforts of the farmers, New York State has a very effective good roads law. The new law is not mandatory, and \$100,000 for carrying it out must be annually voted in the supply bill. It provides that the state shall pay one half the cost of construction, the county thirty-five per cent, and the locality fifteen per cent. The road is to be built by the state engineer, when a county votes to ask for it through the road supervisors. This local option is likely to have a good effect in producing a rivalry between counties to build good roads.

A state bounty of \$1 per ton is to be paid to the grower by the state treasurer of New Jersey upon all beets grown in the state which shall have been manufactured into sugar. The bill provides that not less than \$50,000 annually shall be devoted to this purpose after September 1st, 1898. The appropriation to pay the bounty will have to be voted for each year, and, as the governor can veto any single item on an appropriation bill, therefore the length of time that this bounty will be paid depends upon the results it accomplishes.

During the four months ending April 30th last Great Britain imported 276,922 cwt. of condensed milk and 6,525 cwt. of fresh milk. The latter amount, though a small quantity, is more than four times as large as the total for the same period last year. It is a question whether the importation of fresh milk will reach very large proportions. Milk is comparatively bulky in form and of such a perishable nature that it is doubtful if its importation from any distant point can be made financially successful.

Great Britain imported during the first four months of this year 157,365 tons of potatoes. This is a large amount and shows the deficiency of last year's crop in England. The above amount is fifteen times larger than for the same time last year and the April imports made up the largest monthly total of the year.

What the loss of Cuba means to Spain may be gathered from the following records of the exports from the latter country for 1897. During that year Spain's exports to France amounted to £9,332,000, to Great Britain, £8,932,000, and to Cuba, £5,380,000. Cuba, therefore, ranks next to France and Great Britain as an importer of Spanish products. The Philippines come next with £1,532,000, and then Puerto Rico with £1,508,000. The United States took only £432,000 of Spain's exports.

Wheat flour from the United States sent into China through the port of Chefoo, in Shantung, reached a value of £678,000 in the year ending June, 1897, as against £300,000 in 1888. This shows a large increase in this trade and that the Chinese appear to recognize the superiority of the American flour over their own roughly cleaned product. It is believed that, if flour mills are established in China as there is some thought of doing, the American trade will be seriously affected.

The game of polo has created a large demand for polo ponies in some quarters, and extraordinary prices are now being paid for these small animals. At an English sale of such ponies recently prices ranged from 125 to 300 guineas. One pony noted for its speed and usefulness in saddle and harness was reserved at 400 guineas, or \$2,000.

The question of establishing national granaries for wheat in Europe is receiving considerable attention just now. It is felt in all the leading centres that such a scheme would prove a great boon in case of war or any time of dearth. Before the Agricultural Committee in England evidence was recently given by millers and others in regard to this scheme. It was suggested that half a score of storehouses should be established in different parts of the United Kingdom. One difficulty would be to arrange these storehouses so that large quantities of wheat could be kept without injury for a length of time in the humid climate of England.

Provincial Fat Stock and Dairy Show.

ANIMALS TO BE JUDGED FROM A CONSUMER'S STANDPOINT.

The directors of the Provincial Fat Stock and Dairy Show met last week, and completed arrangements for their next annual show, which will be held in the city of Brantford on November 30th and December 1st and 2nd. Entries will close on November 25th, and the fees charged will be \$2 for cattle, 75 cents for sheep, and 50 cents for swine; no charge will be made for specials. One important change in the regulations is deserving of special mention, and which is included in the following clauses:

"All animals, except those exhibited in the dairy classes, shall be judged from a consumer's standpoint. Awards shall be given to the animals most valuable from a consumer's point of view."

"No animal deemed unsuitable by the judges shall be awarded a premium, but no premium shall be withheld merely because there is no competition."

The good results to be derived from putting into force the regulation contained in the former clause cannot be over-estimated. We have always contended that products of all kinds at exhibitions should be judged from a utilitarian standpoint rather than from an ornamental or æsthetic point of view. Upon this hinges the practical or educational value of an exhibition, whether it be of live stock or any other exhibit from the farm, and we are pleased to learn that the directors of the Provincial Show have taken the initiative in this matter, and have decided to enforce this regulation to the very letter. If cattle, sheep, and swine are to be judged from a consumer's standpoint, it means that all exhibitors will prepare and fit up their animals with that object in view. An exhibition of animals shown because of their adaptability to meet the needs of the export or consumers' trade cannot but be of great educational value to every breeder, feeder, and farmer in the country, and it is to be hoped that there will be a large attendance of these classes next fall.

It is in the swine classes, however, where this feature of the regulations will accomplish the greatest results. For some time there has been considerable contention as to what type of hog was most suitable for the bacon or consumers trade. Within the last year or two this type has been pretty well established, and the export bacon trade demands that the farmers should raise the bacon type of hog and no other. It would be a suicidal policy for us to attempt to build up a large export trade with anything else than the finest quality of bacon. This can only be procured by raising the proper kind of hog and feeding it in the right way. We had the privilege the other day of seeing about 700 hogs graded at one of the leading packing houses in this city, and it was really a surprise to us to notice the great variation in the quality of the hogs so graded. It was conclusive proof that there are many farmers to-day who do not understand what the real bacon type of hog is. There is much to be learned along this line, and the directorate is to be commended for making special provision for prizes for hogs suitable for the bacon trade only. We give below the prizes to be awarded in this particular class and the rules governing it. There is one feature of it that we believe will be the first of its kind in Canada, viz.: the prizes for dressed carcasses. The animals will be brought to the show alive and be killed on the second day of the show. All the other essentials of the prize list will be the same as last year: