

Farm Experiences

SHEEP ON THE FARM

The ordinary grain farm of half a section will carry from fifteen to twenty breeding ewes for nothing. They will live on waste products and cost the farmer not more than one dollar per head for a year's keep. Some extra fencing is necessary and a shed costing a dollar per sheep can be put up to satisfy their need for shelter. A small flock does not go very far from the buildings for food and the loss from wolves is not great. They will gather all lost heads of grain left in the stubble and nibble weeds into oblivion quicker than a hired man with a hoe. The returns are slightly better than \$2.00 per fleece and generally about five lambs are raised from four ewes. The smaller the flock the better they thrive. The better the shepherd the more lambs reared. Bright fine weather is much appreciated and very great cold is not as harmful as high winds or wet storms. Like poultry, they respond very quickly to comfort and fail speedily when lacking comfort thru bad weather. They winter well on straw, going over a lot of it, nipping up every particle of chaff and grain, together with every seed they can find. They prefer hay that has weeds mixed in it.

Shearing may be in late May if the weather is warm and the sheep kept out of cold winds and rain and if they are fat and strong at the time, but if they are thin the second week in June is plenty early enough. To clip about April 1 will in this country kill nine out of ten so treated.

Lambs should be docked at a week old and castrated a day or two after docking. I castrate with a big pair of scissors, taking the scrotum clean off. I do not lose one per cent. I dip the scissors in a weak solution of carbolic acid between operations.

Sheep in this country pay better in mutton than wool, therefore the meat sheep is the kind wanted, low, short, wide and deep. Avoid the breed or the individual lacking wool on the belly, for in cold winter weather or in wet weather such cannot rustle or lie on the cold or wet ground. The sheep with a close fleece and well covered on belly and legs can lie on damp or frozen ground or in snow and not suffer, altho a dry straw bed is better.

As to size, I prefer the small breeds. I can carry four ewes weighing 150 pounds each as easily as three 200 pound ewes, and they will make me more money, grow more wool, raise a greater weight of lambs at weaning time and the loss of one is only three-fourths of the price of the big one. The small breeds mature earlier than the big ones. I claim this as indisputable. It is absolutely true of all animal life. The lamb of the small breed is fit for the knife at six or eight months of age, according to his keep, but the big bred lamb will have a large frame not so well filled in with meat at that age and will often need to be carried on to a full year or more to make a good carcass.

The best authorities say ewe lambs should never be bred. In the main this is good advice, but the ewe lamb of the small, quick maturing kind that was lambed in March and well fed and cared for will produce and raise a lamb, becoming a mother at fourteen months. I have a ewe which won first as fat lamb in Brandon in 1914. She has weaned a ram lamb which is likely to make a good stud sheep and the ewe is full standard size at this time of writing. Why should I have kept her away? Her lamb for mutton is worth \$5.00 and was only dropped in May. At the same time, if such ewes are not well kept most of the lambs will be lost.

In running a farm to full sheep capacity great care is necessary. The pasturing farther from home makes fencing more expensive, wolves and dogs must be fenced out or herders hired, fitting for show is imperative and all kinds of difficulties increase with the large flock. Nevertheless, no meat can be produced more cheaply than lamb, and no meat is more tasty. No meat can be grown with less manual labor, and, on the farm especially, waste can be avoided and weeds killed or turned to a profit better by the sheep than any other domestic animal.

A. A. TITUS.

WHAT I LEARNED THIS YEAR

Every season something new turns up in farm management. Perhaps the experience has been the means of saving time and money, or it may have caused delay and loss. At any rate it is valuable to the individual, and we believe it will be equally valuable to all our readers. We want to get these experiences from our readers and will give prizes for the best letters we receive on "What I Learned This Year."

The following books will be given as prizes:

Farm Management, by G. F. Warren.
Productive Swine Husbandry, by Geo. E. Day.
Beginnings in Animal Husbandry, by C. S. Plumb.
Alfalfa, by F. D. Coburn.

The first prize will be any two of the above, the second prize any one of these books, and the third prize "Alfalfa," by F. D. Coburn.

Letters should not exceed 600 words in length. Any number of experiences may be sent in by the same person, but each should be kept separate and written on a different sheet of paper. Write plainly on one side of the paper only, and sign name and address in full to each experience. Letters from this competition should reach this office not later than December 1, 1915. Address all letters to—

THE GRAIN GROWERS' GUIDE, WINNIPEG, MAN.

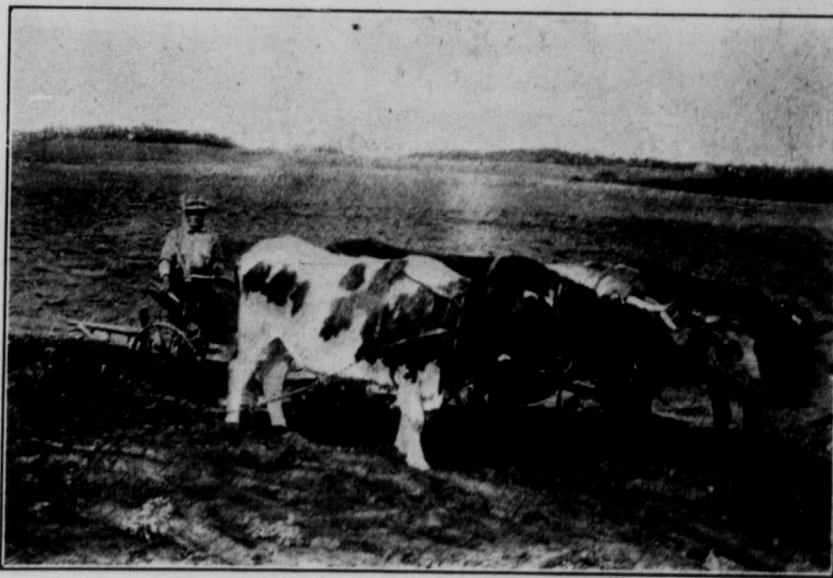
LUMP JAW

As I have had considerable experience in curing cattle of lump jaw, some notes of my methods may be interesting. It is not desirable to begin treatment directly a beast shows a lump on its head. It may be quite different from lump jaw. A blow or a wound or some unknown cause may produce a swelling which will grow to three or four inches across, then break or be lanced and, after discharging pus, go away of itself. Lump jaw has never caused the slightest pain to any animal in the writer's experience. Therefore, if the beast flinches when the sore is rubbed or handled roughly, there is at least a strong probability that it is not lump jaw. This probability is increased if the lump can be moved freely inside the skin. A lump on the cheek is less likely to be lump jaw than one between the eye and nostril, or in the angle of the jaw. Lump jaw is very slow in its early stages and in all stages of its usual forms. There is plenty of time to be very sure that it really is lump jaw. If the lump is firmly attached to the bone, is painless, and other cattle in the vicinity have had lumpjaw, then treatment had better be done as soon as convenient. The writer has treated lump jaw affecting the jaw bones, sundry

glass will do. If the specks are there the beast has lump jaw. If the specks are absent the matter remains in doubt. But it is not well to wait till the lump breaks. If it has been there many weeks and is getting bigger all the time, the case had better be treated.

The Treatment

The proper treatment is by giving iodide of potassium internally. In the old range days lump jaw was occasionally treated with corrosive sublimate externally. The puncher would rope the beast, secure it, cut a hole in the lump, insert a bit of cotton wool smeared with corrosive sublimate, refasten the skin over the wound and release the bawling patient to recover or otherwise, as the case might be. This treatment was never startlingly successful, and sometimes another beast in the bunch would get a lick at the corrosive sublimate, with doubly disastrous results! Iodide of potassium, also known as potassium iodide, or potash iodide, or "KI," can be got at the local druggist's or by parcel post from Winnipeg. The latest quotation I have is 35 cents per pound avoirdupois, but it is likely dearer now on account of the war. I used to buy it made up in two-dram doses at the local druggist's for 60 cents per ounce, Troy. Later I bought it in bulk and measured



Breaking new ground with oxen. Photo by S. J. Wigley, Edgerton, Alta.

glands of the head, the skin, the tissues of the neck and the larynx (i.e., Adam's apple). The latter is the most formidable form of the disease. You can hardly feel a beast's larynx in health, but there is no mistaking its position when there is a big actinomycotic tumor in it. It can then be felt just below the angle of the jaw. In the early stages of this laryngeal actinomycosis it may be mistaken for heaves. In its latter stages it may strangle the beast to death in a few hours. When a lump on a beast's head has broken, a sure means of finding out if it is lump jaw presents itself.

The germs of lump jaw have the proud distinction among microbes of being visible to the naked eye. Put a little of the pus on a bit of clean glass and if your eyes are good you will see some bright sulphur-yellow specks in it. Anyone can see them with an ordinary magnifier—a lens unscrewed from a field

it out myself with home-made scales made of two tin patty-pans hung by bits of fishing line to a beam made of ten inches of wire, bent to shape and suspended from a loop in the centre of the beam by a short bit of line. Total cost of scales, 5 cents. For weights I use coins. Thirty-five cents in Canadian silver weighs only one forty-eighth more than two drams, Troy. The lump jawed beast, if four years old or over, should get two drams of iodide of potassium twice a day for eleven or twelve days. Six ounces of the iodide will make a good job of it. Each dose of two drams is to be administered dissolved in about a pint of warm water. I have only treated big steers and oxen, but young stock and very small cows should get less than two drams at a dose. I always have kept stock in good condition and the early stages of lump jaw does nothing to injure a beast's condition in

the least. Therefore I have never had to stop a treatment, once begun. But if the animal goes off its feed and fails badly, it may be necessary to quit after four or five days for a week or so, and if constipated to dose it with salts until fit to resume treatment.

If a beast is in very poor condition it is useless to administer iodide of potassium. It is only throwing good money after bad, as the treatment will certainly kill the patient. Moreover, if a cow is in calf the treatment will cause the cow to abort. Also if the patient is a milking cow, the milk will be rendered useless for any purpose whatever during the treatment and for a long time after it ends. If only one small lump is present and not discharging on a fat beef, the animal may be killed for local food supply, the head and neck not being used. But such beasts cannot be shipped to the United States.

Long before the end of treatment there should be signs of iodism. This shows that all is going well and the animal getting well impregnated thruout with the drug. The most invariable sign is that the skin comes off in little flakes, looking like bran scattered thruout the hair. There may be also running at the nose, eyes and mouth. Any sore on the animal anywhere may smell bad. The animal loses flesh. The lumps may start to go before the treatment ends. It should not be stopped on this account. Or they may simply stop getting bigger, but not go away for weeks or even months. Bone tumors will be absorbed and replaced with healthy bone. A big lump may slough off and heal up. Gland tumors will just vanish, being entirely absorbed. Or it may be that a small part will remain encysted (walled in) in the middle of the gland and doing no harm there. A lump under the skin may heal up, then break out again many weeks later, discharging pus and then healing up finally without leaving a sign to show where it had been. In this case the pus may still contain the dead germs, which will appear as bleached white.

Cause of the Disease

There are two or more tiny parasitic plants causing lumpjaw, which ordinarily live in the crevices of grass stems, and have rarely been observed even by students. They are intermediate in form between the true germs, such as those of tuberculosis and the fungi, such as rust and smut. Little seems to be known of the life history of these germs. Sometimes a bit of grass stem or a sharp awn with some of these on it will pierce the skin of the beast's mouth or get wedged between the teeth. Then the fungus, finding itself in a warm, moist place, starts to grow like mad. Its presence causes an irritation resulting in the breaking down of the animal tissues into a lymph on which the fungus feeds. Unlike many microbes it produces no anti-toxin, and therefore there is no limit to its growth nor to the number of times the same animal may become infected. The iodide causes the instantaneous disappearance of the lymph before the germs can absorb it, thus causing them to die of starvation and giving nature a chance to repair the damage wrought.

Mankind can have actinomycosis. I have seen one case of it. It is undoubtedly caused by the habit of chewing straws which some people have. But the things which are not known about lump jaw and actinomycosis will no doubt fill a big book—when they have been found out. It is not believed that it is contagious from animal to animal or from animal to man. It is not believed that an animal can infect the pasture or fodder with the disease, altho this is more doubtful. It is not believed that the meat of a lump-jawed animal can produce actinomycosis in man. I will not be responsible for saying that "lumpys" can be freely and safely handled. But I have no hesitation in handling them myself, using, of course, the scrupulous cleanliness which should be observed in all cases of disease in man or beast.

A note or two as to the actual work

Continued on Page 18