

The annual report of the Experimental Farm last year contained a statement of these operations, and during the past summer further experiments have been carried on. Mr. Fixter has brought here to-day some samples of the different kinds of honey. He has also brought some sections of comb made in the apiary, and I think perhaps the most interesting experiments which have been carried out have been those with regard to different kinds of foundation. When the apiary started last year, Mr. Holtermann wrote and asked us if we would carry out some experiments with the different kinds of foundation. The central portion of the comb is formed from the foundation. The foundation is produced artificially and is supplied to the bees, thus saving them a large amount of labour, time and energy in producing the foundation which is then "drawn out," as it is called. The wax in the foundation is drawn out and extended until it forms the cells of the honey comb, such as I have in my hand. Now, according to the nature of this foundation, so is the comb which is produced, and I have here, in my hand, two sections of the comb which was made last summer by our bees and filled with honey. The honey has been extracted, and we have the empty comb for examination. I have here a piece of the artificial foundation similar to that we put into the section. This is cut to the size of the section and is put in the centre; the bees then draw it out from either side and fill it with honey. We have found by supplying this foundation that it saves the bees a lot of time and energy. They are working all the time and we are getting all the meat without any bone. They draw out the wax we give them and add to it very little, and the whole of their effort is then given to producing the honey. It takes about 10 pounds of honey to make one pound of wax, so that by every pound of foundation we give the bees, we save 10 pounds of honey, and therefore it is a paying operation to give them the foundation, and we have also found that it pays very decidedly to supply bees with the best foundation which is procurable.

By Mr. Featherston:

Q. That is a natural comb, is it not?—A. Yes, it is drawn out from the foundation.

Q. It is natural comb, not an artificial one?—A. No, it is a natural comb, but it was drawn out from the artificial foundation given to the bees to work on.

Q. It is done by the bees?—A. Yes, certainly; another advantage is that it is always much straighter and more even. It is stronger and easier to handle. If you give them a good foundation they build their comb and section, as it is called, straight, so that it is more easily marketed, but in the old basket hives the comb was irregular, and you had to cut it out in pieces and sell it by weight, and there was a great waste, so that in every way there is a great advantage in supplying a good foundation, and in following the newer methods adopted by bee-keepers.

By Mr. Carpenter:

Q. Is it a new idea?—A. No.

Q. It has been done for some time?—A. It has been done for years, but the question we are trying to solve is as to the character of the foundation that should be used. Mr. Holtermann pointed out that the nature of the foundation had a very appreciable effect on the sales of the honey, because if the foundation was dark coloured and gave a dark "fish bone," as they call it, that is the central portion, it would sell for a cent or two a pound less than if that were not showing. Now, the Central Farm honey combs which I have with me this morning, some are made from good foundations, and some from bad ones. But perhaps you will see the difference better from this photograph I hold in my hand.

Really, the experiment was to find out which was the best foundation, and whether it paid the farmer to buy a cheap foundation, or a superior one at a slightly higher price. We found that, as in many other things, the best foundation gave the most satisfactory results and paid the best in the end. You will see here from the samples I exhibit, two combs made from bad foundations and one made from the best, and you would readily notice the difference at a glance. It shows how much better it is to get the best foundation you can, because you get better results

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