

MARCH 16, 1911

## THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE

## Early Shearing.

To many readers, suggestions regarding shearing sheep in March or April may appear unreasonable, but to those who prepare sheep for showing at the fairs, the practice of shearing in the months named is common. As a rule, all the yearlings in the flock are shorn thus early, if they are in good condition. And there is really very little risk in such early shearing, provided the sheep are kept in moderately warm quarters for a week or two after. It is not advisable to shear breeding ewes due to lamb early, as they are generally in thin condition, and hence more susceptible to cold, and liable to contract udder complaints. Sheep thrive much better devoid of their fleeces in the warm spring weather, and make a much better appearance in the autumn months with their heavier coats, in the show season, and when sales are mostly made. Another advantage in early shearing is that it may be done before the rush of spring seeding, when time cannot well be spared for anything else, and otherwise the shearing of the sheep is liable to be delayed until late, when the animals may lose some of their wool by rubbing against fences, which is not uncommon, especially if ticks are worrying them, a condition which should not be allowed to prevail, and would not if the flock were dipped in the fall, and again after shearing. If ticks are present at early shearing, dusting with dry sulphur, and rubbing it in, will clear them out for the time being.

A temporary shearing floor may be improvised in the sheep pen, by tacking a few boards to the cross-pieces, this floor to be stood against a wall, and tied there when not in use. The objection to early shearing, owing to the lower price paid for unwashed wool, is ground for argument, and the difference made by buyers in this country is excessive—more so than other countries; but, taking into account the improved condition of the sheep from early shearing, the loss of wool pulled or rubbed out, and risk of life from river washing, the advantage is probably on the side of early shearing of the greater part of the flock.

## Over \$400 a Year From 30 Ewes.

Editor "The Farmer's Advocate":

Recently I have noticed articles written specially on sheep husbandry in your valuable paper, an industry which has been seriously neglected of late years. And why so, when few other branches of live stock are more profitable than sheep-raising? I presume the dog nuisance, which has been more encouraged than more profitable lines of stock, has tended to discourage this important branch of farming. Few farms in Ontario are properly equipped without a flock of sheep, as they are not only profitable in themselves, but also are great scavengers, such a needful service in these days, when weeds are struggling to take possession of our farms. A sheep will eat with relish almost any kind of weed, turning the same into wool and mutton. The product of these weeds would otherwise have been lost, and, worse, would be detrimental to the farmer's interest. What is needed is education to make a good flockmaster. He must be a student; he must study the condition of his farm and the breed best adapted to it; and, with an object in view, endeavor to breed animals of a desired type, having an eye to conformation and wool. My advice is that, first, after determining the breed, he should purchase a few pure-bred ewes from some reputable breeder, also a ram from another flock, an animal possessing plenty of character, true to breed type. This I would much prefer to endeavoring to bring to perfection by grading up, as life is too short to attempt to accomplish something equal to that which has required the study and skill of generations. This is as essential as it is in breeding for the dairy or in breeding beef cattle. How frequently we hear people say there is nothing in dairying, or there is nothing in beef production, when they have really given neither proper attention. The breeding has been indiscriminate. So it is with regard to sheep-raising, which is too frequently carried on in a haphazard way, intermingling the several breeds, as Leicesters followed with Shropshires, Cotswolds, Southdowns, Oxford, Dorset Horn, or anything that might be purchased—a curious conglomeration of "neither fish, fowl nor good red herring." Such a nondescript class of stock is frequently placed upon the market, covered with burrs, which is an index to the character of the breeder, who tells you there is nothing in sheep-raising, because he has tried it.

Now, Mr. Editor, I am a breeder of Leicesters, which has been the preferred breed of our family for the past two generations, and I have found them very profitable—so much so that I have no intention of giving up the industry. Our flock of thirty ewes produce an average of forty-five lambs annually; the fleeces of the sheep average 13 pounds, unwashed, of course, and at the present price would bring one dollar and eighty-two cents per head. The lamb crop, for commercial purposes, at six cents per pound, lambs weighing one hundred and thirty pounds each (although a number in August last exceeded one hundred and

fifty pounds in weight), bringing three hundred and fifty-one dollars; this, with the amount of wool added, would bring four hundred and five dollars and sixty cents. But we usually do better, selling ten or a dozen annually for breeding purposes, which tends to make the profits much greater, saying nothing about the money received in prizes, which more than pays for the keep of the individual prize-winning animals. My flock, on the whole, receive no more attention than any other live stock on the farm; in fact, less. Thus, you will see the sheep make a good return for the money invested, as well as insuring a clean and enriched farm. The philosopher was justified in saying, "The sheep hath a golden hoof." What is wanted is more protection to sheep, and less to dogs, with better legislation and more consideration from Fair Boards, and more practical Institute speakers, who would do much to inspire the Canadian farmer, who has grand opportunities to produce the choicest sheep in the world, as our climate, soil, grasses and other feeds are admirably suited for such a purpose.

W. J. WESTINGTON.

Northumberland Co., Ont.

## A Satisfactory Hog Account.

Editor "The Farmer's Advocate":

I have read with a great deal of pleasure a number of articles on the hog as a money-maker. I also read, some time ago, about feeding hogs at a loss, and opinions concerning the number of hogs that should be kept on 100 acres. I think the friend feeding at a loss must have had poor selection and not very good care, and perhaps not the best digestible food. I think there are two or three points which must be observed in raising hogs for profit.

First.—They must be in good warm, clean, comfortable quarters, with plenty of sunlight for winter feeding. In summer, if running out, they should have a good shelter in times of wind and storm. Most hogs are teachable, and not nearly so inclined to be dirty and unclean if given a proper chance.

Second.—Care should be given in selection of breeders, both of sows and boar. The individual is what counts in any breed. I have pure-bred Yorks, and I find I need to be careful, or they run too long and make hard feeders; but, being careful in selection of sows, I have little trouble. They make wonderfully quiet mothers, and I generally get good litters.

Third.—It makes all the difference in the world what you feed, especially when the pigs are small. There is no feed that suits me like shorts or middlings for pigs under 100 pounds in weight. This may be mixed with well-ground oats, according to the by-products you may have, but I believe, with shorts, you have the cheapest feed which can be obtained, considering the growth and quality of your pigs.

I have been in the habit of taking stock of my pigs every year, what they consume in feed, and pigs every year, what they consume in feed, and what I sell. I think there is too much guess-work in this respect. I raise all my pigs, buy-work a change for breeding purposes only, and I shall enclose my last year's statement, so as to add to the interest of hog production, and I trust that other subscribers will give us their experience, that we may be helped by each other, in this as well as other lines, especially dairy cows for milk. Following is the statement for 1910:

22 pigs, at \$3.50 .....	\$ 77.00
5 shoats .....	50.00
1 boar .....	15.00
3 sows .....	90.00
7 sow pigs .....	140.00
	<b>\$ 372.00</b>

Feed consumed:	
25,710 pounds shorts .....	\$295.80
11,815 pounds mixed chop .....	203.24
5,400 pounds corn feed .....	69.45
1,400 pounds bran .....	16.25
300 pounds oil cake .....	5.55
900 bushels mangels .....	63.00
1 acre pasture .....	5.00
	<b>\$ 658.29</b>

Total .....	<b>\$1,030.29</b>
Fatted and sold .....	<b>\$1,079.35</b>
11 shoats, 150 lbs., at 6½c. lb. ....	107.25
21 shoats, at \$6 each .....	126.00
9 shoats .....	47.50
16 pigs .....	56.00
3 fat pigs, 200 lbs., at 6½c. ....	39.00
2 fat sows .....	55.00
1 boar .....	15.00
6 sows .....	150.00
	<b>\$1,675.10</b>

Leaving a balance in favor of hogs of \$644.81.

I also had whey from 183,851 pounds milk; that, at 10 cents per cwt. of milk, would reduce profit to \$460.96.

I might also add my young sows did not do as well as they should, one losing all her pigs,

and other two had small litters, but did better this fall; and would say, in conclusion, I am satisfied that the manure more than pays for the labor. I would like to add, also, that I bought all the feed except about four tons of mixed chop. I raised the mangels, and am satisfied at less than price charged for same, 7 cents per bush. Oxford Co., Ont. WM. J. WHALEY.

## Prosperous Cattle-feeders.

One of the very finest farming districts in Canada is the region comprising sections of Brant, Waterloo and Oxford Counties, surrounding the Village of Ayr. Land gently rolling affords ideal drainage, while methods of cultivation have combined with rich manure from extensive steer-fattening operations, to bring the fields to a very high state of productiveness. It is noteworthy that, wherever cattle-fattening is carried on, land-fattening results. A partial explanation is found in the fact that manure from fattening cattle is more valuable, pound for pound, than manure from growing stock or milking cows getting the same feed. The fact that fattening cattle are more highly fed than growing animals—more highly, indeed, than the majority of milch cows—supplies a further explanation of the superior value of manure from finishing steers. And not only does steer-fattening enrich the land; it lines the pocketbook and studs the countryside with substantial farm homes, as the Ayr district abundantly attests.

Visiting this prosperous district last week to address the Farmers' Club on orcharding, one of our editors had an opportunity to spend a few hours driving around to the stables of three or four cattle-feeders, by whom he was heartily entertained. Here were fed the champion carload of export steers in the Union Stock-yards show last December. It is pre-eminently a Shorthorn section, and appropriately represented by such successful and rising young breeders as Kyle Bros., whose herd numbers many excellent breeding cows; while Newton Ringleader, one of the bulls in service, is of the same breeding as the highest-priced bull at the Scottish sales last year. Not to make this article read like a "Gossip" write-up, we must content ourselves with a few brief notes about steers and steer-feeding.

Robt. Cochrane, President of the Farmers' Club, has the making of exhibition material in a trio of April calves, one of which he raised on separator milk after a few weeks' start on whole milk, while the other two had sucked their dams till purchased by Mr. Cochrane in the beginning of November. These weighed, over three weeks ago, 754 pounds each, while the skim-milk calf, which was a little older, topped the beam at 760 pounds on the same date. While not quite so sappy as the others, it is little behind in this respect, and, except for exhibition purposes, a long way ahead in profit. These calves are dividing among them a daily ration of a gallon of bran, a gallon of chopped barley, and a quart of oil cake, also a bushel of cut mangels, fed three times a day, and what hay they can eat.

John W. Maus, in Brant County, is feeding 32 head of choice export cattle, and 10 for heavy butcher or light export demand. Some of the best cattle are being fed loose, and doing, on the whole, rather better than those that are stalled and let out daily for exercise. Mr. Maus is having his first experience with silage, having built last year a cement-block silo 14 x 35 feet, at a cost of \$325, besides hauling the gravel, digging the excavation, and supplying water. The cattle were put in about November, but not fed silage until about the tenth of December. They are now getting silage about three times a day, and 1½ pounds meal per day. The meal at first consisted of half oats and half corn, but is now half oats, a quarter corn, and a quarter peas. The cattle are rapidly covering their ribs, and Mr. Maus is pleased with both loose feeding and silage.

Roots, rather than silage, are still the reliance of J. J. Brown, who has five capital steers rising three years, and four rising two years old. The rations, until recently, have been, for the young steers, 6 pounds a day of barley and oat chop; and for the older cattle, 7 pounds per diem. Both lots are now being fed heavier on a mixture of oats, barley and corn, in quantities of 8 and 10 pounds per day, respectively. They also get 40 pounds of mangels and all the hay they want. Mr. Brown feeds only twice a day, roots, chaff and grain being given first morning and evening, with hay as soon as the short feed is cleaned up. Loose feeding is practiced, and gives good satisfaction. Mr. Brown calculates to put on 300 pounds' gain during a winter's feeding, but considers that his cheapest gains are obtained in summer.

A thoroughgoing feeder is Wm. Manson, who fed some of the champion car lot above referred to. Mr. Manson is also engaged in dairying, supplying milk for a retail trade, but securing from a local creamery buttermilk to feed the considerable stock of hogs he has usually on hand.