

JULY 29, 1909

greatest development of the high-priced parts of the carcass, such as the leg of mutton, the loin and the rib, but a happy medium in size for the breed, with thick flesh and smoothness. Allusion was made to showing standards, and objection taken to the placing of awards on over-fleshed animals, whose carcasses would not bring the best prices when cut up for the consumer, because over-fat; animals whose usefulness had been unnecessarily impaired by long feeding on heating and forcing foods. In this respect he believes English judges were worse than American.

On breeding questions, Mr. McKerrow said the mutton-producer decided upon his breed for improvement, and, if intelligent and thoughtful, looked for constitutional development in the sire he might be buying. This development was manifested in many by a large heart-girth, a well-developed dinner-basket, a bright, large and bold eye, a strong, masculine neck and head, a bold carriage and active movement, which also are all indicators of prepotency. This animal must also have the best mutton development—a heavy leg of mutton, a wide, thick loin, and well-sprung rib, and thick flesh throughout. Constitution meant more and stronger lambs, while mutton development and quality meant earlier maturity, better mutton carcass, and more money for each individual lamb, a greater profit to the producer, with more healthy energy and pleasure to the consumer.

Further, it was pointed out that good feeding is as necessary as good breeding, and useful hints were given on this topic.

Test of So-called Anti-Abortion Serum.

The act of Congress, making appropriations for the United States Dept. of Agriculture, for the fiscal year ending June 30th, 1909, provides as follows:

"That the Secretary of Agriculture is authorized to purchase in the market samples of all tuberculin serums, antitoxins or analogous products, of foreign or domestic manufacture, which are sold in the United States for the detection, prevention, treatment or cure of diseases of domestic animals, to test the same, and to publish the results of said tests in such manner as he may deem best. . . . For some time past there have appeared in certain agricultural and livestock papers advertisements of 'the Robert's serum treatment' for abortion in cows, by the Dr. David Robert's Veterinary Company, Waukesha, Wis. In the advertising matter sent out by that company, there is an order sheet giving a list of 'remedies,' one of which is 'Anti-Abortion Serum,' for preventing and curing abortion in cows."

In accordance with the provision of law above quoted, the Department recently examined a sample of the preparation referred to. Analysis by the Bureau of Animal Industry shows that the preparation is not a serum, and contains no serum. The sample contained approximately 98 per cent. of water, the remainder consisting of phenols (carbolic acid), oil of cloves, and a very small proportion of what appeared to be some form of vegetable matter.

Live Stock in Japan.

The latest available statistics in regard to live stock in Japan are for the year 1905, when the following totals were printed: Oxen, 233,733; cows, 788,985; bulls, 486,315; mares, 813,056; stallions, 554,682.

It is rather surprising to note that the number has steadily decreased since 1900, but it is more than likely that there has been a considerable increase in the last two years, owing to a movement, encouraged by the Government, to improve the breeds of cattle and horses, and to increase the number to meet the growing demand. It is only in later years that the Japanese have taken to the use of milk and butter, and the present demand is not great, while there is practically no demand for cheese, except among the foreign residents, and to supply hotels, etc.

The imports from the United States in 1907 were: Nine horses, valued at \$1,778; bulls, oxen and cows, 179, valued at \$15,792; all other animals, \$152; total, \$18,022. The imports from other countries were as follows: England, \$131,672; France, \$67,988; Canada, \$9,266; Australia, \$56,956; and Korea, \$186,137.

The first shipment of frozen meat from Australia to England left Brisbane, by the British India Company's steamer, Dorunda, May 21st, 1881. It consisted of 354 sheep and 100 quarters of beef. Success did not immediately attend the venture, but the shippers were not discouraged, and the works devoted to freezing have since multiplied, and the volume of trade grown considerably. In 1907, the quantity of beef frozen and preserved was 51,074,653 pounds, and of mutton 10,253,893 pounds. The bulk of this went to England.

THE FARM.

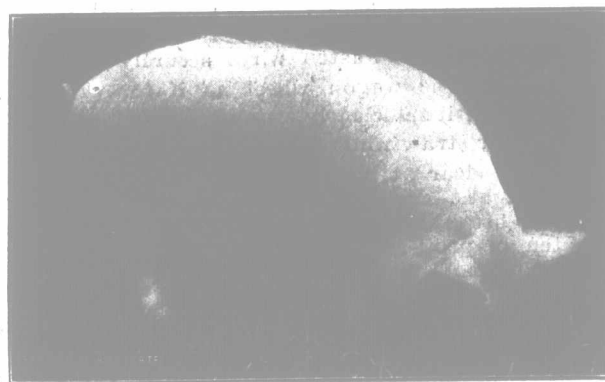
Litmus-paper Test for Soil Acidity Not Reliable.

It has long been known that the clovers, including alfalfa, do not succeed well on acid soils, and farmers have been advised, before sowing alfalfa, to give their soil a dressing of lime, at the rate of 1,000 to 1,500 lbs. per acre, if they had reason to believe that acid was present in injurious quantity. It has often been stated that the acidity of the soil could be tested with litmus paper. The directions were to take a strip of the blue litmus paper, press it upon the moist soil, and if it changed to a pink color, the soil was acid, and required lime to make it fit for the growth of alfalfa.

In a series of experiments on alfalfa-growing, recently, conducted by the New York Experiment Station, litmus paper was used to determine whether the soil of the fields under test was acid. The results were very unsatisfactory, and tend to show that litmus, as commonly used, is not a reliable indication of acidity in the soil, so far as the acidity affects alfalfa. There was little apparent variation in the degree of acidity in the different soils, if the depth of color of the litmus be taken as a measure. Yet, some of these soils were much benefited by liming, and some were not.

The litmus-paper test is so exceedingly simple that it would be of great use to the farmer if correct, but it is to be feared that it is too unreliable to use.

Professor Harcourt, of the Ontario Agricultural College, communicated with by "The Farmer's Advocate," in reference to the above conclusion, agrees with it. He thinks that the nature of the growth on the soil is vastly superior to litmus paper as an indication of acidity. He recommends applying lime on small areas, and noting results.



Walton Rose 56th.

Middle White sow. First at Bath and West of England Show, 1909.

Farmers Retiring.

I do not believe it should be required of any man that he should work all his days at such a strenuous business as farming, and I would like to see it possible for farmers to acquire a competency a little easier and earlier in life, in order that they may enjoy a well-earned rest. Then I think others would be attracted to the profession of farming. A life of continuous toil is not an inviting one.

In this respect, I take issue with that Agricultural College president in the States, who, speaking on this vexed question, how to keep the farm covered with people, is reported to have said, amongst other things, that "Some means should be devised to keep farmers from retiring." He said that after they acquire a competency they retire and cease to be producers.

And why should they continue to toil on after having a competency? Of course, the more they produce the better for others and the nation, because the nation has much need of farm produce, as it adds to the wealth of the country and furnishes what cannot be dispensed with. But after a farmer has gained a competency, of what use to him is more? Why should he be required to toil all his days, when many others are very likely leading lives of luxury and dissipation? The fact of the matter is the farmer is considered a beast of burden, who should work for the benefit of others, and these others are all doing their best to rob him of the fruits of his endeavor. Some would have the farmer work all his life, and, perhaps, then turn his carcass into fertilizer. We might expect some more sympathy from an agriculturist (that word has been well defined as one who works the farmer rather than a farmer), but is it not a fact that even College presidents are so far removed from actual farm conditions that they have no personal knowledge of farm work, and are not in touch with farmers?

If it is desired to keep the farmer with a com-

petency on the farm, perhaps he could be induced to stop on a farm if given a salary, like an Agricultural College president gets, with a few extras, and some presidents to do his work, as only they could do it.

Personally, a life that is mapped out for the farmer by those who know very little about it, would have no attraction for me. I believe in taking enjoyment out of my own life, and am considering myself quite as much as others.

GEO. RICE.

Notes on the Wheat Crop.

Editor "The Farmer's Advocate":

We do not remember a season when winter wheat varied so much in appearance. In this locality, about one-fifth of the crop is as good as it could be, another fifth will give an average yield, while the remaining three-fifths will not yield above 15 bushels per acre. The cause of this difference is found in the condition of the seed-bed last fall—wherever the moisture was conserved, and germination of the seed could take place in reasonable time, there the wheat is good.

Last autumn was so unusually dry, following a dry summer, preceded by a winter of little snow, that it was almost impossible to obtain enough moisture for germination, excepting on well-worked summer-fallows.

From August 4th to November 25th we had only a few showers, while at the same time there was a high range of temperature; consequently, stubble land, which constituted three-fifths of the area sown to wheat, had no chance to do well; germination took place very late, and the growth was weak. And, though the winter and early spring were favorable, the cold, wet period following was too trying to the weakly plants, and we now see the effects.

Two years ago we gave in "The Farmer's Advocate" an account of our system of wheat cultivation, namely, to ridge our summer-fallows just before haying, then give them thorough surface cultivation up to seeding time. This plan has always given us splendid results, and this year we expect a crop of 35 bushels per acre. Our stubble wheat has not done as well as usual, one field having a hill facing the west running across it, which lay bare and exposed all winter, and another field having some hardpan patches in it, where the plants suffered most by the cold, wet spring, yet, by present appearance it will yield about 20 bushels per acre. Ridging fallows at odd times during harvest will do, if the harrow and roller follow immediately, but why fallow in the old-time way, when there is a better way? We have not cross-plowed our land for eighteen years, and never purpose doing so. By keeping the lands the same size and way, we are prepared for any weather, wet or dry. When seeding-time arrives, we have only to double-disk across lands; drill and harrow after. The land being fine and moist, germination takes place at once, and the plants grow vigorously up to hard, frosty weather. We double-disk and cultivate our stubble land as soon as the crop is off, thus stopping surface evaporation at once, besides working the surface soil into fine tilth, so that it holds any rain that falls, while in the meantime moisture is rising from below, and usually by sowing time there is plenty of moisture for germination.

This plan is not recommended for dirty land, which should never be sown to wheat, but any grain crop following roots or sod, by this plan will give profitable returns, as we have proven by several years' experience. There are two points in this method we must emphasize: First, to cut the grain as low as possible, so as to leave but little stubble; second, to work the soil until every particle is moved to the depth of three inches, as merely scratching the surface will not do on the ordinary Ontario farm. What wheat requires is a fine seed-bed, with a comparatively firm bottom, and a fair amount of available plant food within easy reach. This plant food is found in greatest quantity in the surface soil; then, why turn this under, by plowing, beyond the reach of the rootlets of the young plants, when they most need it? Besides, we have found that the more the soil is moved and mixed, the more productive it becomes; hence, we cannot over-cultivate when the soil is in proper condition.

The fear, expressed some years ago, that there would soon be an overproduction of wheat, has not yet been realized. In fact, stocks of old wheat were never lighter, and it does not look as if wheat would be low-priced for some years to come. Wherever the soil is suitable, Ontario farmers should sow a good acreage. It distributes both the seeding and harvest operations; it gives a good quantity of straw and chaff; it is good to seed to clover and grasses, and, besides, under proper management, it is a paying crop. I am perfectly safe in saying that, for a period of thirty-five years, our average yield has been 30 bushels per acre, on about an equal amount of fallow and stubble land. Only in one season had we any quantity to plow up. The