

FARMING

Vol. XVI.

JUNE 6th, 1899.

No 40

Repair the Fences

The month of June is a good time to repair the fences on the farm. On some farms this is not a very difficult task, as the fences have never been neglected, and consequently only need comparatively little attention; but on other farms, where the fences have been allowed to a certain extent to shift for themselves, the task is not an easy one. When a fence is badly out of repair it would perhaps be much easier to build a new one.

Be this as it may, a few days should be devoted to going over and repairing the fences as soon as the seeding and planting is done. It is poor policy to sow a crop and have it destroyed by the stock breaking into it because of bad fences. But the damage to the crop is not the only loss incurred, as the demoralizing effect such breaking in has upon the stock is about as serious as the injury to the crop. An animal that has once formed the habit of breaking into the grain fields because of bad fences is a nuisance on any farm and the sooner it is got rid of the better. Fences out of repair are incentives to this kind of thing, and many good horses and cattle are rendered totally unfit for pasture life on the farm because of them.

Repairing the fences should be one of the necessary pieces of work on every farm, and if a special effort is made it is surprising how much can be done and how many rods of fence can be gone over in a couple of days. The old style rail fence will soon be a thing of the past, not because it has outlived its usefulness, but because good fencing timber is getting scarce. This old fence is gradually being replaced by the many wire and other fences on the market. But even these modern fences will not last forever without looking over every year. A farm well fenced and with growing crops is as beautiful a sight as one could wish to see, but a farm on which the fences are out of repair and thoroughly dilapidated is a regular eyesore. So we say, keep the fences in repair and make your farm a thing of beauty and a joy forever.

The Export Bacon Trade

The export bacon trade has very much improved during the past few weeks, and a considerable advance in the price of hogs has been the result. Last week choice bacon hogs on Toronto market brought \$5 per cwt., which is an advance of fully 50 cents per cwt. since the middle of the month. This improvement in the export market and the advance in prices has been, to some extent, caused by the extremely low prices for bacon which have prevailed in Great Britain during the past few months. These low prices have tended to greatly increase the consumption of bacon, and to bring about a reaction in values which has resulted in better prices and a better outlook for future business. A month or two ago the exports of bacon from Denmark were very large, but as the price was low it was expected that the supply from that source would soon fall off, as it would not pay the Danish farmer to raise hogs at the price paid. The recent improvement in the situation would seem to show that Danish supplies have been greatly lessened, and that the farmers there have left the field for awhile.

Since the development of the export bacon trade Canadian hog markets have not been so much influenced by the hog situation in the United States as formerly, and

prices here, especially for bacon hogs, are governed by market conditions in Great Britain rather than by the market situation at Chicago and other western hog centres. While this is in a large measure true, still conditions in the Western States, such as a large supply or a shortage of hogs, must have their influence upon the market here. There are evident signs of a shortage of hogs in the west. The *Western Breeders' Journal*, in summing up the situation, after pointing out that the light corn crop last year and the high price of mill feed caused many farmers to unload their hogs as quickly as possible, says:

"Under the aforesaid conditions farmers generally became discouraged or at least indifferent and lost all interest in hogs, those who had no brood sows would not buy any, and those who still owned a bunch sold them off much closer than usual, and the result was that perhaps less than two-thirds the usual number of brood sows were kept over."

The *Iowa Homestead*, in speaking of the pig losses this spring, says:

"The losses this year are quite heavy, owing in part to the severe weather of the late spring. Farmers have lost heavily where they have bred for early litters, but early breeding is not so much the rule with them as it is among breeders of purebred stock. At the same time, their preparations to receive the litters when they arrive are, as a rule, not so comfortable and complete. Breeders of purebred stock have also been large losers in many sections of the west, the loss in early pigs being in many instances as high as fifty per cent., or even more. Indeed, in some large sections of the breeding districts, the pigs farrowed as late as the latter part of April and prior thereto have only averaged about two to the litter saved."

The *Cincinnati Price Current*, of May 25th, a journal whose statements can usually be relied upon, gives the following summary of the situation:

"While the record shows some gain in number of hogs marketed the past week there is a continued large deficiency in comparison with the movement a year ago. The returns of western packing indicate a total of 465,000, compared with 415,000 the preceding week, and 395,000 two weeks ago. For corresponding time last year the number was 540,000. For March 1 the total is 4,655,000, against 5,040,000 a year ago—a decrease of 385,000, or 8 per cent. The quality continues good. Prices have moderately strengthened, and at the close average fully 5 cents per 100 pounds higher than a week ago."

Whether this scarcity in the west affects the Canadian trade or not it is gratifying to know that the situation on this side has greatly improved. The depression of the past few months has been one of the severest the Canadian bacon trade has experienced since its inception, and it is to be hoped that it will be a long time before we shall experience another one like it. There is a somewhat bright side, however, in the fact that the very low prices have increased consumption and caused Canadian bacon to go into more homes than it otherwise would, thus advertising its good quality.

There was an increase of nearly 100 per cent. in our bacon exports in 1898 as compared with 1897, and there is every prospect of a further increase this year. What is required, however, is that the quality of the product should be maintained, and in this a great deal depends upon the condition in which the hogs come to market. In last week's market review we stated that very many under-sized hogs were being marketed and that packers were complaining of some