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FARMING

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TOPICS FOR THE WEEK.

Agricultural News and Comments.

It has been said that in slaughtering hogs the pork packers save everything but the squeal. But it would now seem that hereafter even this will not be wasted. At the Trans Mississippi Exposition an enterprising concern has in its exhibit a life-size image of a hog seated on its haunches, with a phonograph before him from which proceeds a choice assortment of squeals. The instrument was probably loaded in a pig pen at feeding time.

The highest prices paid for range cattle at the Chicago stock yards during the past ten years are as follows: In 1888, \$5.40 per 100 lb., in 1889, \$4.10, in 1890, \$4.50, in 1891, \$5.60, in 1892, \$4.60, in 1893, \$1.75, in 1894, \$4.90, in 1895, \$5.10, in 1896, \$4.25, and in 1897, \$4.90. From these figures it will be seen how the market varies from time to time. In 1889 the highest price was \$4.10, and in two years it had risen to \$5.60. There are ups and downs in all markets, and it will pay the farmer not to give up too readily any special line, as a reaction always takes place.

Barred Plymouth Rock pullets were hatched last year on March 10th at the Central Experimental Farm, Ottawa, which began laying about the end of September, and continued well throughout the winter. As a rule the chicks at the Farm are hatched by hens in May or early June, and lay late in December, sometimes sooner. Hens moult too late as a rule. The moult of young hens can be brought on sooner and shortened by proper care, diet, and range. The Experimental Farm hens, as a rule, show a profit of \$1.75 to \$2 each per annum.

Mr. Joseph Gould, Uxbridge, Ont., milks seventeen Jersey cows and fourteen of them last year gave, on an average, 303 pounds of butter each. A separator is used and the cream sent to the creamery and the sweet skim-milk returned. This skim-milk supplies about 60 per cent. of the food of his hogs, of which he sells about seventy-five every year. Among Mr. Gould's brood sows is one which gave fifty-seven pigs in three litters. The average output of this sow amounts to \$200 per year.

The following figures show the imports of dairy produce, etc., into the United Kingdom during the first six months of 1898, 1897, and 1896.

	1898.	1897.	1896.
	cwt.	cwt.	cwt.
Butter	1,620,604	1,655,254	1,554,974
Margarine	451,279	474,030	448,486
Cheese	725,855	794,813	771,964
Milk, condensed	406,751	363,803	285,195
Eggs (great hundreds)	6,431,123	6,934,548	6,240,032

It will be noticed that there is a shrinkage in every line excepting condensed milk, which shows a material increase. There is, however, a large increase in the imports for 1897 as compared with 1896, so we may expect a falling off in 1898 as compared with 1897.

An English poultryman claims that it is possible to keep fowls confined in a grass run, or at liberty about a farm-yard at the rate of 200 to the statute acre in a healthy condition and to yield a profit of not less than 5s. per head per annum. The food to consist of eleven parts Indian meal; eleven parts of a low grade Cockle seed and two parts of quarter-inch bones, the price of the mixture varying from 7s. to 7s. 6d. per 240 lbs. In addition to this, five sacks of mixed peas and corn screenings were supplied in the experiment upon which the above is based, but no shell-forming or gritty material.

The best and finest wool is found on the shoulders of the sheep, and this is made the standard of the whole quality of the fleece. If the wool on the other parts of the animal approaches it in quality, the better the fleece will be all through. The density of the fleece is tested by closing the hand upon the wool of a part of the loin and on the rump. The perfect fleece is nearly equal in fineness of staple from the shoulder to the thigh. A perfect fleece is really a certificate of perfect health in the sheep, and of the good management of the flock by the shepherd.

In Great Britain roots take the place of much of the grain and coarse forage which would otherwise be required for stock. In such cases sheep are fed as much as 20 and cattle 100 pounds daily. In this county, where they are more often used for variety than nourishment, the animal is given a smaller allowance. A fair allowance of roots, according to *Feeds and Feeding*, is four to five pounds of carrots for horses; twenty to thirty pounds of mangels for dairy cows; and four or five pounds of rutabagas for sheep.

Live Stock Importations.

In our stock notes this week we give a short account of the purchases of sheep and hogs made by Mr. J. E. Brethour, Burford, Ont., in England, and which should arrive this week. All these purchases have been made with a view to securing the best animals possible, and, as will be seen, all of the stock importations have been either prize-winners or in the "highly commended" classes at the Royal Show held at Birmingham at the end of June. Both Mr. Brethour and the gentlemen for whom he has made purchases are experienced breeders in their special lines, and we may safely add that the best use possible will be made of these importations in the way of improving the live stock interests of Canada. Mr. Brethour made

selections in person, which is a guarantee that no inferior animals will be among the importations.

The value to the country of bringing in new blood in the way of live stock importations cannot be too highly estimated. There are some who are inclined to the opinion that such importations are no longer necessary. For years Ontario breeders have been giving special attention to the production of the highest types of animals, and have now the best herds of cattle, sheep, swine, etc., to be found on the continent. This is undoubtedly true, and it is to the lasting credit of our breeders that every year Ontario is coming to be looked upon in a greater degree as the breeding ground for America for pure bred live stock. But how have our breeders been able to build up their herds and to bring them up to their present degree of excellence? Has it not been by making frequent importations and by bringing in new blood? This fact, together with the skill in feeding and caring for live stock which our breeders exhibit, is the key to the situation, and it would be a sorry day for the live stock interests of this country if the importation of new blood were no longer looked upon as necessary in maintaining the efficiency of our pure-bred horses, cattle, sheep, and swine.

We are of the opinion that the future has in store for the Canadian breeder greater opportunities than the past has ever afforded him. There are two particular ones which we will refer to as likely to be the product of the future, and there may be others. During the past few years there has been a great demand in Canada for stockers for the United States feeding grounds. This demand is likely to continue in a greater or less degree. There is a feeling in some sections of the Western States that the stockers brought from the North or from Canada feed better than the wilder animals of the great prairie ranges. In last week's issue, in a short article on "Live stock in the Western States," we pointed out that the cross between the Shorthorn and the Western cattle produced an animal that was easier to feed and easier to handle than the Western or American cattle. The more docile qualities of the Shorthorn helped to modify the wilder nature in the prairie animal. Is there not something in this that can and will be developed, and which will create a great demand for Shorthorn animals for use in the Western herds; if so, there is an opportunity for Canadian Shorthorn breeders to dispose of their stocks to advantage, which may be of much greater value to them a few years hence than it is now.

Then, again, the Canadian bacon hog is arousing considerable interest among the American breeders, and, though many of them may "poo-hoo" the idea of the American swine breeder ever having to give up his fat, corn fed hog, we are inclined to the opinion that this feeling will change, and that the American farmer, as well as the Canadian farmer, in the near future, will have to confine his energies to the production of the bacon type only if he wishes to make money by producing pork. As the Canadian export bacon trade develops, and our farmers learn to raise only a class of hogs suitable for producing the highest quality of bacon, the Americans will find their export bacon trade with Great Britain gradually slipping out of their hands, the same as the cheese