

STOCK FOOD.

Several samples of what are usually termed "stock food" have been examined. A glance at the above table will show that in some there is a very fair quantity of protein and fat, but it must be remembered that the cost of the nutritive components of foods when purchased in such form is much in advance of their real value. Moreover, the claims that by the use of condiments and spices the digestibility of other components of the ration can be increased and in this way a saving of food can be effected, have no basis in fact. As foods, pure and simple, therefore, the prices paid for stock foods are ridiculously high when compared with the price paid for some of our most expensive standard foods.

Another important point is the ash. As was pointed out the quantity of ash in a food for young and growing animals is very important. The ash of most of our home grown foods and the ash of many of the by-products of our mills furnish a very fair amount of bone forming material. A glance at the above figures shows that all of the stock foods examined contain very large quantities of ash. In most cases, however, the ash of condimental foods contains considerable quantities of potassium salts, which tax the excretory organs of the animal and are, therefore, a decided detriment.

Another claim made by dealers in stock food is that such foods are of a medicinal or stimulating nature, and are claimed to be particularly effective and valuable, not only for growing animals, but also for cows in milk and for horses. This claim, however, should carry very little weight with the intelligent feeder, since it is a well established fact that healthy animals need no medicine or stimulant.

The writer does not mean to insinuate that stock foods should not be used under any circumstances. On the contrary, we believe that they have their places. For example, feeders who are fitting their stock for the show have successfully used stock foods. Their place, therefore, appears to be in a ration for show animals, but probably it would be better to use such foods only in the last stages of the fitting process.

It is claimed by certain prominent feeders that a better bloom can be obtained by the use of small, and limited quantities of some stock food in the last stages of feeding. It must be remembered, however, that such feeders do not consider the cost of a feeding-stuff, and in such cases as these in which the cost of the food can be overlooked, stock foods may be used.

The following shows the composition of two substances from which it was proposed to manufacture a stock food. Readers will be struck at once with the comparatively small quantity of nutritive material which such a mixture would contain. As stated before, the claims that such foods increase the digestibility of other fodders have no basis in fact. Furthermore, the purchaser of stock foods is frequently assured that the secretion of the digestive fluids is very greatly increased by the use of certain condiments. That such, in certain instances, may be the case we have no doubt, but the price paid for these foods is likely to be far in advance of the gain.