

LIVE STOCK.

Judging Sheep.

The following instructions as to the method and manner of judging sheep in the show-ring are copied from Professor John A. Craig's excellent book, entitled "Live-stock Judging." As they are founded on an extended experience and careful observation, they will appeal to the student of this class of work, and may be safely accepted as sound in principle:

METHOD OF EXAMINING SHEEP.—In examining sheep it is advisable to adopt a definite course of procedure, so that nothing may be overlooked and each motion made to disclose something in regard to the merit or demerit of the sheep. In the show-ring that contains as many as ten sheep in a class, it is easy to see that the judge must work quickly as well as accurately; and there is nothing that will contribute to both of these like examining each part of the sheep in regular order. The best course to follow is, perhaps, to begin at the head, pressing down the lower lip with the finger and thumb, so that the teeth may be seen and the age estimated; then, with the hands under the jaw, look carefully over the head, seeing that the eyes are all right, the head a good shape, and no appearance of horns in those breeds that are hornless; while in those that possess these, note that they spring clear from the head. Then pass to the neck, feeling with the hands the fullness of it, and, in addition, observing the length and the way it swells to meet the shoulder at the shoulder vein. Pass down to the brisket, putting one hand on the floor of the chest and the other at the top of the shoulder, and in this way form an idea as to the depth of the sheep through these parts. Next note the shoulder, observing how it is covered with flesh along the side and top, and also taking the girth of the spring of the ribs with the sheep. From the top of the shoulder, using one hand, follow the line of the back to the end of the body. By carefully handling these parts the fleshiness of the sheep, or the way the ribs are covered, and the straightness of the back, are determined, and at the same time the spring of the ribs is made apparent. The width of the loin should then be taken, and also its covering and thickness. The width of the hips should next be observed, and, turning to one side and using two hands, the length from the hip to the end of the hind quarter should be made apparent between the two points. Then the width of the hind quarter and the manner in which it is carried back and the fullness should also be examined. Following the joint towards the leg the development of the thigh on the outside requires examination, and then with the hand the quarters should be firmly felt.

DECEPTION DUE TO TRIMMING.—In this way the sheep has been thoroughly examined as to form, but it is to be remembered that the hands should be thoroughly relied on to discover all defects of form, and unless the sheep is carefully handled the examiner is very likely to be deceived. The wool of all show sheep and fat stock of the medium wool classes is always trimmed, and the trimmer possessing skill can give any desired form to sheep, providing the wool is long enough and the sheep approaches somewhat towards the form which is being imitated.

ESTIMATING AGE BY THE TEETH.—The order of appearance of the nippers or incisors in sheep is a fairly reliable method of telling their age. The sheep has eight permanent incisors, and these appear in regular order in supplanting the milk teeth. The milk teeth can always be told from the permanent incisors, by the fact that they are narrower. The permanent incisors are broad and wide, and widened considerably towards the top. The first or central pair of incisors appear when the sheep is slightly over one year old. The next pair—that is, one on each side of the central pair—appear the following year, and that is when the sheep is two years old; the third pair appear when the sheep is slightly over two years old, and the fourth pair when it is between four and five years old. This completes the number of incisors, and a complete set always indicates that the sheep is between four and five years old. High feeding or forcing hastens the age indications, so that the variations are often unnoticeable, especially in show sheep or those imported from Great Britain.

JUDGING SHEEP FOR MUTTON AND WOOL.

In judging fat sheep it is necessary to consider the needs of the feeder of this class of stock, the demands of the butcher for lambs and mutton, the desires of the consumer and the requirements of the manufacturer of wool. These requisites must be merged together to arrive at a correct view of the whole.

THE FEEDING TYPE THAT GIVES THE BEST GAINS.—In considering the type of sheep which gives the best results in the feed lot, we have only to have in view the type that gives us the greatest vigor, insuring an active digestion

and the most constitution, so that nothing may upset the sheep in the rapid progress desired. In this connection it will be well to report the results of an experiment made at the Wisconsin Experiment Station by the writer. Two lots of lambs were selected; the one bred by the station showing in fleece and form a high degree of merit for grade sheep. These lambs were bred from high-grade ewes, and the rams had been selected at high prices for some years to make the best blend with the ewes. The lambs were very uniform as to type, and they showed what might be called an unusual degree of merit for ordinary feeding lambs. To compare with these, some lambs native to northern Wisconsin, showing the type common to that territory, were put upon similar rations. The representatives of both these kinds of lambs, in addition to having the same kind of food, were kept under identically the same conditions, putting both lots of lambs in the feed lot at three cents a pound, and taking them out at four cents at the end of the feeding period. The well-bred lambs, of good feeding type, after paying for the feed that they ate, at current prices, yielded a profit of \$1.13 per head; while those representative of the poor type being indiscriminately bred only yielded a profit of 60 cents per head. The lambs of the best type ate more food, but they made more than a corresponding gain, and the chief point should not be lost sight of, that the profit from each one of them was just twice as much as that from those being of inferior type.

THE FEEDING TYPE BRINGING MOST AT MATURITY.—In the selection of feeding lambs the feeder has to keep in view the fact that there is

the highest value per pound, as that is quoted at ten cents. The breast and chest have the very low value of two cents per pound. It is very evident from these facts that the back, loin and the leg are the three divisions that are most prized in the lambs that would be ideal from the butcher's standpoint.

QUALITY.—After the form of the sheep has been carefully examined the quality should be noticed. This means the cleanness of the bone, fineness of the skin and the nature of the hair which covers the face and legs. These are important features in either breeding or fat sheep. It is, perhaps, the most valuable from the butcher's standpoint, because the waste is less from a sheep of good quality than it is from one that is inferior. The range in the percentage of dressed weight in lambs will vary from 50 per cent. to 60 per cent. of their live weight, so that it will be understood that quality is an important factor from the butcher's standpoint, where the profit from the carcass is largely determined by the dressed-weight returns.

THE QUALITIES OF THE FLEECE.—In estimating the worth of a sheep or judging it, not only is it fair to consider the demands of the feeder, the butcher and the consumer, but with these we must include the qualities desired by the wool manufacturer. Though the returns from the fleece are not very large, yet the sheep-breeder must consider them so that the ultimate profit may be as great as possible. To arrive at a correct understanding in regard to this, the examiner must follow the best method of examination, and also know in detail the market requirements for wool.

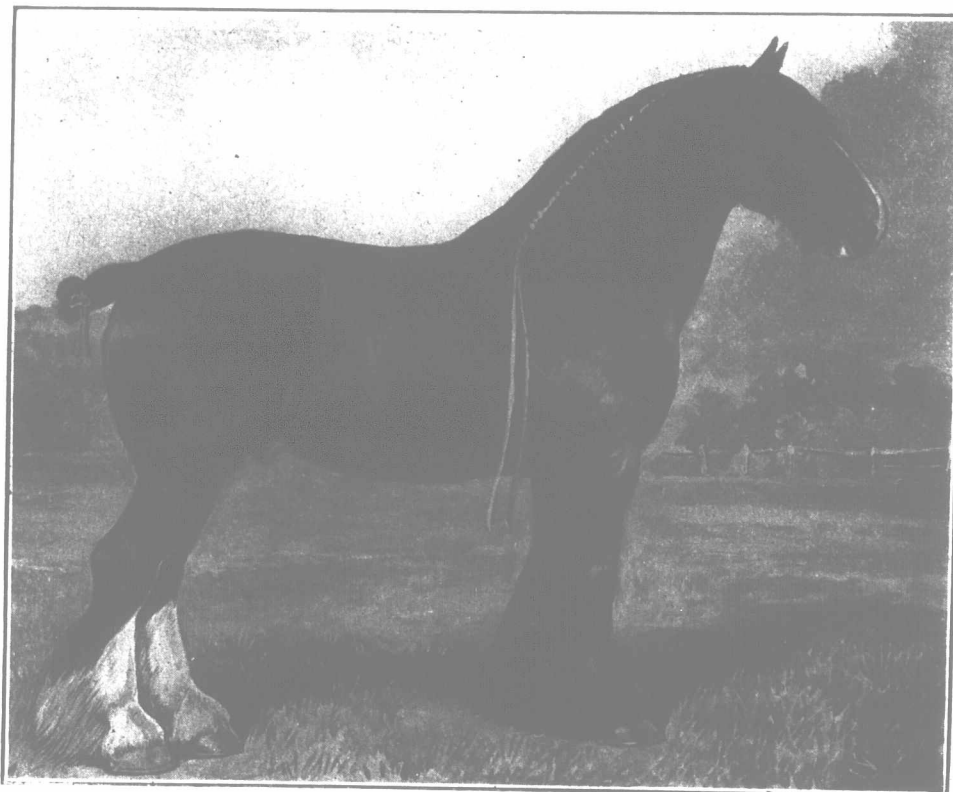
EXAMINING THE

FLEECE.—In examining and valuing the fleece, the chief points to consider are the quantity, quality, and the condition. In grouping the qualities under these three divisions, we can include the interests of those directly concerned on the various products coming from sheep on the market. The best method of arriving at the nature of a fleece is to open it first just over the shoulder. It is in this region that the finest and the soundest wool of the fleece is found. By using the hands in a flat position, instead of sticking the end of the fingers into the wool, the fleece may be parted in a more satisfactory manner. After looking at the wool and skin in this region, the thigh should be the next place of examination.

for here grows the poorest and coarsest wool of the whole fleece. Then the covering of the wool on the belly also demands notice, for very often sheep are quite poor in this region, making the wool light and indicating a lack of constitution. By examining the fleece in these three parts a fair estimate may be made of its qualities.

QUANTITY OF FLEECE.—The chief factors which determine the quantity are the length, density and evenness of both of these over all parts.

DENSITY.—The density of the fleece means the closeness of the fibers. Technically it means the number of fibers that grow on a square inch. Density is not only of value to secure a heavy fleece, but from a breeder's point of view its chief importance lies in the fact that it is more protection to the sheep than a fleece that is open. Not only is a sheep with a loose, open fleece more liable to contract a cold from exposure to rain or wind, but it is also more apt to yield a dirty fleece, as the loose fleece catches the dirt and dust and pieces of hay and straw. From the shepherd's point of view, the denseness of the fleece is its leading feature, for it will be found that those animals with dense, close fleeces are less subject to such diseases as catarrh, running at the nose, or scouring. When a sheep experiences a chill, it at once affects the circulation and sends the blood to the internal organs, and inflammation or scouring results. This is why sheep that have open fleeces are more subject to such diseases than those that have dense fleeces. Wool is one of the best non-conductors of heat that we have, and when it is on a sheep, in the form of a dense



Roxwell Saxon Harold (22732).

Shire stallion in stud of Messrs John Chambers & Sons, Holdenby, Northampton, England. (See Gossip.)

most demand for the lamb that when fat weighs about 100 pounds. Such a lamb has the quickest sale at the highest price per pound. This type is one that is not too heavy boned and large framed, but such as require only a medium amount of flesh to make the carcass smooth and plump at the weight indicated. It is the low-set, thick type that possesses these qualities to the highest degree. To secure the greatest profit in feeding, it is desirable to have the gain made as rapidly as possible. The younger the animal the cheaper the cost of gain, and it is that feature that makes early maturity such an important consideration in the different classes of stock. The market favors a lamb of the weight mentioned, because, as a rule, such usually dress better and the cuts are smaller.

THE TYPE DESIRED BY THE BUTCHER.—If we were to consider only the things that have the most importance in the view of the butcher we would have a very queerly-formed sheep presented to us. The butcher is very desirous of obtaining the greatest percentage of valuable cuts, consequently the different parts of a lamb from a butcher's point of view show a wide variation from the feeder's and breeder's ideal. In the lamb that is ideal from a butcher's standpoint, it would not be necessary to have any neck, chest, or digestive apparatus. The neck has a comparative value of only one cent per pound, the shoulder is two cents and the shanks the same. The rib running from the point of the shoulder to the loin has a value of nine cents per pound, and the same is true of the loin, while the leg of mutton has