

The Farmer's Advocate AND HOME MAGAZINE.

THE LEADING AGRICULTURAL JOURNAL IN THE
DOMINION.

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JOHN WELD, Manager.

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True it is, only matters pertaining chiefly to pure-bred stock are dealt with at the annual meetings of the associations, but this has its influence on the entire live-stock industry. Even those farmers or breeders who are not rearing pure-bred stock should have a registered sire at the head of the herd or flock, and he should be looking forward to that day when his entire stock will qualify for registration in the National Live-Stock Records of Canada. At present, 1.25 per cent. of the cattle, 1.04 per cent. of the hogs, and less than 1 per cent. of the horses in the Province of Quebec are pure-bred. Ontario may present more favorable percentages, but pure-bred stock is regrettably scarce in Canada. Now that we have some of the best blood on the Continent, and have been importing so long from the foundation herds of the Old Country, it is time that more farmers reached out for improved sires and dams, and aspired to better things in their herds and flocks. It is not necessary to have champion stallions and bulls or thirty-thousand-pound cows. Records are made for the purpose of testing certain strains, and as a means of advertising, but when one obtains the progeny of such parentage he goes a long way towards eliminating the misfits and undesirables that crop out as the result of all breeding operations.

It may appear autocratic on the part of the Canadian National Records at times when they refuse to register animals that have a number and a certificate which look quite official but have been granted by some association or society which has no standing, or it is not recognized by the Canadian National Records. Live-stock breeding is a world business, and our records must be recognized in all countries. The Committee in charge of this work have endeavored to make our standard second to none and at the conclusion of the war, we are called upon for

foundation stock the breeders of this country will be proud that such vigilance has been maintained. The associations having the destiny of the various breeds under their control have been working with one end in view, and that is to keep them pure and in their pure state before the public. Breeders of all kinds of stock should look to their deliberations for council and advice, and aspire to better things through the assistance of the National Records and the sessions of the Live-Stock Parliament.

A Compromise Required in the Labor Market.

At this season of the year farmers will begin to look for labor, and when the question is put to the unemployed or to under-paid men in the city why they do not work for a good salary in the country, their reply too often is that they do not get fair treatment from the employer on the farm. There are two sides to every story, of course, and there are two sides to this question, but we fear that in too many cases farmers do not consider the rights of the laborer and expect too much of him. Every honest man will pay for his labor and will be willing to pay for what he receives, but the time of the eighteen-hour day is past. Labor unions and governments have stipulated a more reasonable period for work during each twenty-four hours, and although labor has been scarce in the country, for reasons different from these set forth in this case, yet if the farmers generally will be satisfied with a good honest day's work from the man in their employ, we venture to say that labor conditions will be improved throughout the country. If the laborer does not know his work and is not accomplishing much, it is not reasonable that he should work longer hours in order to perform a certain amount of work. It is more trying on the uninitiated to perform a small amount of work which he does not understand than it is to the experienced worker who does a commendable day's work. Shorter hours and better treatment will do something to make farm work appear more inviting to the under-paid or unemployed man who should be in the country to-day. Furthermore, if laborers could accurately estimate the value of their work in terms of production, in bushels or in pounds, the salary could be more easily adjusted.

Nature's Diary.

A. B. Klugh, M.A.

A sparrow which is common throughout Canada, wherever there are fields or open country, is the Vesper Sparrow. It may be readily distinguished from all other sparrows by the fact that it has white outer tail feathers, which show very conspicuously when the bird is flying away from one. Its name is derived from its habit of singing in the evening, though as a matter of fact it sings at all times of the day, as far as my observations have gone, quite as vigorously in the early morning as in the evening. Its song somewhat resembles that of the Song Sparrow, but instead of starting on three high notes its first three notes are much like "who-oo-who-oo-who-ee." To my ears this song is not at all hard to distinguish from that of the Song Sparrow, but to many the songs must appear very similar, for when conducting classes in bird study at the Macdonald Institute at Guelph, I found great difficulty in getting some students to discriminate between the songs of these two species. The Vesper Sparrow is often termed the "Grey-bird," a name which is applied to many small, ground-haunting birds. It builds a nest composed of grass-stems and rootlets on the ground in open places.

The food of the Vesper Sparrow for the year consists of sixty-nine per cent. vegetable matter, and thirty-one per cent. animal matter. If we consider its food for the spring, summer and autumn months, that is during the period which concerns us in Canada most directly, we find that the animal food is slightly in excess of the vegetable. This animal food consists entirely of insects, mainly of beetles and grasshoppers. As soon as beetles appear in the spring the Vesper is on the alert to capture them, and by May they constitute one-third of the total food, but as grasshoppers become more and more abundant with the progress of the season, they increase proportionately until they become its chief constituent. In July they form forty-one per cent. of the food.

As soon as seeds begin to ripen they begin to appear in the menu of the Vesper. Of the seeds eaten on half are those of noxious weeds, about one-quarter consist of grass seed, the seeds of those grasses which are weeds predominating, while some eleven per cent. is grain. The latter is eaten mostly in August, and consists of waste grain picked up in the fields at harvest time. We can readily see from its bill-of-fare

that the Vesper Sparrow is a very beneficial species.

A little sparrow which is a very common resident of the dooryard and garden is the Chipping Sparrow. Before the introduction of the House Sparrow this little bird was the commonest species about dwellings, and this fact has given it the scientific name of *Spizella socialis*, "the sociable little sparrow." The name, Chipping Sparrow, comes from its song which is a high trill, and which is usually rendered in syllables as "chippy-chippy-chippy-chippy." This species may be known by its chestnut crown and plain grey breast. It builds its nest in bushes and vines, constructing it of grasses and lining it with hair. I have sometimes heard it termed the "Hair-bird" from this well-lined nest which it makes. The eggs are from four to five in number, and are a pale blue in color, spotted with black at the large end.

The Chipping Sparrow ranges throughout Canada, from the Atlantic to the Pacific. As in the case of the Song Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow and all other species which have a wide range, the Chipping Sparrows from different regions show slight differences. When the birds of a certain species show these slight but constant differences they are termed a sub-species. In the case of some of these sub-species the difference between them are quite marked, so marked indeed that when they were first discovered they were described as distinct species, but as more careful study was made of bird-life right across the continent it was found that these so-called species gradually merged into one another, so that they were not distinct species. So they are called sub-species, or geographical races of the species. Thus, in the case of the Song Sparrows of the prairie region they are much paler than those of the east, while those of the Pacific Coast are much larger and darker, yet there is no sudden change as one goes across the continent, and all are races of one species. In the case of the Chipping Sparrow the Western birds lack the reddish-brown on the back which is characteristic of their Eastern relatives.

In its food habits the Chipping Sparrow is highly beneficial, as it feeds almost exclusively on insects and weed seed. It raises two broods of from three to five young in a season, and these youngsters require very large numbers of insects for their sustenance. Dr. C. M. Weed has seen a Chipping Sparrow carry fifty caterpillars to its young in twelve hours. The adults themselves eat great numbers of insects, among them being some of the most injurious forms, such as canker worms, tent caterpillars, army worms, and weevils. Its food, while with us, is nearly all insects, as most of the weed seed is consumed in winter.

The Need of Fruitgrowing.

Although cold-storage or ordinary storage plants some times act in restraint of trade it is necessary that more storage plants be established for carrying fruit over the seasons of abundant offerings on the market. The season of 1914 and 1915 will demonstrate this necessity very thoroughly. It is usually noticeable that a low price at the beginning of the season will be followed by more handsome figures during the closing of the selling season for fruit. High prices put a damper on the entire season's market, for people will not start to consume, and prices drop not to recover again during that year. Poor fruit is sure to go on the market, and it has the effect of weakening prices. It may be claimed that people are willing to pay the price of good fruit, but poor fruit or poor commodities of any kind tend to reduce the value of the better article. With some system of storage more extensively in use the fruit supply could be doled out more efficiently than is now being done. Fruit growers who stored their crop in the fall of 1914 are now receiving favorable prices for their product.

A Chance for the Banks.

The York Co., Ont., council at a recent meeting is reported to have adopted unanimously a resolution to the effect that the Dominion Government should require the banks to provide better financial accommodation for farmers, putting them on a parity in privilege with business concerns.

The Convention of the Fairs and Exhibitions Association did not relish the proposal to cut the Government Grants to Fall Fairs in half, but like many another organization of producers their pleas fell on deaf ears. Fall fairs have in the past been considered one of the best educational agencies in operation to aid the producer to increase his output, but they must suffer with the rest as a result of war.

The season of 1915 will afford an opportunity to all lines of industrial enterprise to demonstrate their actual value to the country, and where they are in time of need.

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