



24-year-old cow, first in milking competition, Tring Agricultural Show, 1906. Owned by Capt. A. W. Smith, Norfolk.

Our English Letter

The Heat and Storms—Crops in the North of England—The Empire's Studs, Herds and Flocks—Vaccination for Tuberculosis—Items

LONDON, Aug. 25, 1906.

The first portion of August is noted by meteorologists for the occurrence of heavy thunderstorms and generally broken weather; this year has been an exception to the rule. The heat has been very great during the whole of the summer, as I write the thermometer is over 80 degrees Fahr., and we have had it up to 87 degrees in the shade. July was a similar month, and high temperatures were recorded, the first fourteen days of which I spent in Sweden. In Stockholm, which is a long way off, other north, several times it was 86 and 87 degrees in the shade. Such great heat as we have had always brings in its train heavy hailstorms, and these have been more numerous and did a greater amount of damage than is usually the case. I received a letter last week from the secretary of the Huntingdonshire Chamber of Agriculture which speaks for itself, as being a plain and unvarnished statement of the havoc caused by hailstorms. This is one case only. Remember that there are many other districts where the damage has been equally great. I give the letter in full, as it speaks for itself.

"Will you help this chamber by drawing attention in your next agricultural article to the great damage to crops inflicted by the hailstorm of the 2nd inst. in the counties of Huntingdon, Bedford and Cambridge. The hailstones, which were jagged pieces of ice, were in many cases five inches in circumference. They fell with a force sufficient to kill a flock of starlings roosting on a tree; rabbits were killed in the field and many coveys of partridges. The damage to the crops is estimated by practical valuers who have carefully inspected the storm area at £20,000 (\$100,000). The wheat, barley and oats were so threshed as to have the appearance of having passed the machine. The storm has brought ruin not only to small occupiers, but also to big farmers. Bearing in mind that this loss has swept across a district which has been suffering from agricultural depression it is more of a national disaster than many of those that have

been received by a Lord Mayor's fund."

CROPS IN THE NORTH OF ENGLAND

In the north of England cheerful reports are prevalent of the luxuriant crop of hay that has been got into stack. The contrast between the yield of meadow grass this year and last is most striking on the hill farms. In the higher reaches of crop last year was about half an average. In the outlying portions crops were very light and only a mild winter spared the farmer the inconveniences of a shortness of fodder. There is no district in the north of England where the root crops are even in character. In Yorkshire they vary very much and are best on land retentive of moisture, and the promising outlook has removed all cause of anxiety among farmers, who last year found all their supplies of roots exhausted half way through the season.

THE EMPIRE'S STUDS, HERDS AND FLOCKS

In the introduction to the agricultural statistics there is a paragraph which puts more clearly than perhaps it has ever been before the leading position of the British Empire for its studs, herds and flocks. In its animal wealth the agriculture of the British Empire, with its Indian possessions, takes a pre-eminence which it does not even share with its great wheat producing competitors, for it very conspicuously outdistances them all, as, indeed, it does in human population, a fact which must not be regarded as affecting the problem.

No other flag covers, as does that of the Union Jack, a herd of one hundred and twenty million cattle, including in this total the herds of Indian buffaloes. The United States, with sixty-seven million cattle, and the Russian Empire with forty-five million cattle, come next in order of magnitude; and these three states stand well ahead of all others supplying returns. In sheep the British Empire total reaches one hundred and fifty seven million head, somewhat over half standing to the credit of the Australasian colonies. The latest Argentine estimates, although the totals are somewhat uncertain, also appear to reach about half the flocks

of the British Empire. Even including goats, as the latest Russian figures do, the flocks of the Czar's dominions are estimated at sixty-five millions, while the sheep stock of the United States is now officially put at no more than fifty-five million head, which, unless there is some strange defect in the yearly records, is a return to the numbers of sheep reported a quarter of a century ago. If it is so, the ratio of sheep to persons in the United States has fallen enormously.

VACCINATION FOR TUBERCULOSIS

Not a little interest is being taken in the experiments which have been carried out at various agricultural colleges, with the object of finding out whether by a system of vaccination immunity from the widespread disease of tuberculosis could not be secured. The experiments have now got past the laboratory stage, and the results have been found to be sufficiently satisfactory as to warrant the entertaining of a hope that a comparatively safe and inexpensive method of vaccinating cattle against tuberculosis has been evolved. There is every reason to believe that a healthy animal of any age can be protected against tuberculosis, but the most effective method of eradicating the disease from a herd will be found to be by systematically vaccinating the calves within a few weeks or months after birth.

According to skilled reports which have been drawn up regarding this subject, the first point is to select a strain of tubercle bacilli that is of low virulence in cattle. Having obtained this it is cultivated and injected into the jugular vein of the calf. It has not yet been decided what degree of immunity is conferred by one injection, and it may be that two operations with varying intervals may be necessary. It is also impossible to say yet how long the immunity conferred by the vaccination will last. It may be found that a life-long protection is unattainable, and that vaccination repeated yearly or at longer intervals. In any case, however, a system which is practicable in its protection will be welcomed by breeders.

ITEMS

The Royal Agricultural Society will hold their show next year at Lincoln in the last week in June. Lincoln is a cathedral city in the centre of a fine agricultural district, and is well known the world over among racing men as the first big handicap of the season is run there and named after the city.

The Royal authorities hope the show will be equal to the one at Derby, which was a success in every way. It left a net profit of \$10,000 and a gross profit of \$20,000. The difference is arrived at in this way: Out of the subscriptions of the members \$10,000 is set aside annually to go towards show expenses. This sum was not touched upon at all, \$10,000 profit being made in addition to it.

Large supplies of English apples are coming into the market, and more than fill all the demand for this class of goods. Crops are variable, but in the west, midland and western counties where the biggest acreage is grown it is reported a poor one, many districts having states average yield. The apple and pear trees were badly affected by blight and the late frosts in the spring did considerable harm to the blossom.

All London markets are very quiet just now, and it is many years since so many people have been out of town for their summer holidays.

A. W. S.