

SHEEP AND SWINE.

SHEARING LAMBS.

The economy, or even the admissibility, of shearing lambs in the early fall is a feature that can be considered only in such portions of the country as have the advantage of mild autumn weather and the delayed approach of winter. In portions of the Pacific slope and southern Texas, where biennial shearings are practised to a considerable extent, lambs have been frequently sheared. The comfort of early-dropped lambs, in the more northerly latitude, would undoubtedly be increased by the removal of their fleeces before the advent of extremely hot weather. It is fair to assume that increased thrift would follow. In fact, to see a March lamb with two or more inches of wool, panting beneath a July sun, is not calculated to encourage hopes of rapid gain while such conditions continue. It seems worth the consideration of flock-owners to determine whether or not they will be profited by summer shearing of all lambs over three months old. The wool would pay the expense incurred, and it may be that the increased thrift resulting from consequent comfort would prove a handsome profit. This is the conclusion of a writer who gave, in the *Country Gentleman*, his experience with a flock of graded Southdown-Cotswolds:

"Having the lambs to come very early in the spring, their wool grows to be three or four inches long before shearing time, and having noticed by leaving this on that it grew to be very long during the summer months, and they would lie in the shade and pant on account of the excess of wool, while the dams were out grazing, I came to the conclusion to try an experiment by shearing some and leaving some unshorn, to see if there would be any difference when spring came again. I sheared two and left the rest. The result was simply wonderful. Those two I sheared came up in the fall and looked like my yearlings. They were fat, and while their wool was not quite so long as the rest, it was much thicker, and seemed to grow much faster during the winter than those I did not shear. They stood the winter better, and by shearing time they were larger and better every way. This experiment induced me to try again by shearing one-half of my flock of lambs, and the result was about the same. The next spring I sheared all but two, they being thoroughbred out of Canada ewes, and thinking that by leaving the wool on I could sell them better in the fall for breeders, but found this to be a mistake, for in the fall I showed these two at the fair, and also some of those that I had sheared, with some that had just been brought from Canada to show (they not being sheared either), and the result was that those that had been sheared were given the first premium."

MANAGEMENT OF YOUNG SWINE.

A correspondent of *The Cultivator and Country Gentleman* says: "There is still much error among farmers in the management of pigs; and this error I find prevails most with the best breeds, being petted and overfed with the rich food in which the fat-forming elements prevail. Corn constitutes too often the principal food, which disposes to fat at the expense of material for building up the frame. This last is the important point—to make all the bone and muscle possible, securing a stout, large frame that will sustain without difficulty the load of fat which all good breeds readily put on. This secured, a greater degree of health and vigour will result, with more wholesome fat and a better proportion of sweeter and more wholesome flesh. The profit will also be greater on the food than on a fat-forming

ration, like corn, is made the sole, or even the principal food. During the fattening period corn is better disposed of by the more vigorous system and a greater amount is consumed. It is only preparing the animal in the best way to do the best, adapting the food to the end.

"The food must be largely of a nitrogenous character. Fortunately we may have an abundance of it and of considerable variety. Skimmed milk stands, perhaps, at the head to start the young pig, and may be continued with advantage to the end. My experience for many years has shown that the pea is the best grain for promoting growth of bone and muscle from the start and continued with the corn through the fattening period. It used to be a common practice here to grow peas for this purpose, usually some oats being grown with them. Heavy crops were grown in this way, and made a cheap and suitable food in connection with milk and grass. In a dry time when the grass was short, occasional cuttings of clover and other green food were given. The hogs never were confined to the pen during the summer, but allowed a free range of pasture for exercise and fresh air, and the result was a large, well-developed frame and vigorous health, fitting them perfectly for the fattening period. Finer and better fatted animals were not easy to find, bearing well on their large, stout frame all the fat that could be put upon it.

"Contrast this with what we too often see—the young pig shut up in a dark, close pen, droned with filth, and fed almost exclusively on corn, too feeble to bear the unwholesome fat it makes under such circumstances, failing to attain the size and weight it would under more favourable conditions. The hog should be treated in a rational way, not like the filthy animal he is held to be. By nature he is disposed to be more cleanly than we give him credit for. If he has the bad habit of wallowing in the mire, he has the desire of securing coolness by it, which his hot nature requires."

FALL OR WINTER FEEDING.

An Iowa exchange calls attention to the fact that many farmers in that region will give up feeding spring pigs in the winter for the next spring market and fatten in the fall for early winter market. That is well, and we like it all the better because it comes from experience. These farmers have tried it and found to their satisfaction that it is not the profitable source. Probably the chief cause of this is the enhanced value of the corn as compared with the price a few years ago. When corn sold for twenty-five cents it made just as much pork as when it sells for fifty cents per bushel, but the margin of profit to the man who feeds it to his hogs is not as large, unless the price of pork corresponds to that of corn. That is one very important factor in bringing about this changed condition of things; indeed it is the factor. Something besides the enhanced value of corn enters into the problem, and that is the thermometer, or rather the temperature. A live animal has a certain normal temperature which must be maintained. When the atmosphere is warm as during the summer and autumn there will be no great demands made on the food of the animal in maintaining his normal temperature. Consequently the man who feeds his animal a bushel of corn in October will get a very much larger increase in the weight of the animal than he who feeds a bushel in January. In the cold weather the animal uses up a certain large per cent. of his food in keeping up the heat of his system, and after that is done the balance will go to adding to his growth. Now it is clear that if it takes ten per cent. of the food to maintain his temperature in October, and thirty per cent. to do

the same in January, the animal will fatten much faster in the mild autumn than in the cold winter. Hence it is for the interest of the farmer to have early pigs, feed and fatten for early market. If early pigs can be made to dress 275 to 325 pounds or even more than that in exceptional cases, by the holidays, it is much better than to feed all winter for the spring market, unless the price of hogs is very much higher in spring than in autumn.—*Farmer's Review*.

CLOVER FOR HOGS.

I would not undertake to summer hogs without clover. During this season clover takes the place of corn. Hogs like it better than any other grass, and do better on it. A clover field is as near heaven as a hog can ever get. A clover patch in blossom is a hog's paradise. There he finds that perfect peace and fulness of joy which man finds not outside of bowers elysian. Nor is clover a more expensive food than corn; on the contrary I believe that it is the cheapest food that can be provided for hogs. It is true that where the growth is luxuriant, as it should be, the hogs will drag and trample down part of it, but this is not lost by any means. It will become incorporated with the soil and add to its fertility. The soil will be enriched by the swine manure left on the ground in addition to this. The true value of hog manure is not recognized. Some farmers endeavour to save the solid excrement, but no effort is made to save the liquid manure. Yet careful analyses and practical experiments have proven that the liquid manure, while not so great in bulk as the solid, is of so much better quality that the value of each is about the same. While the hogs are pasturing the clover, both solid and liquid manure are put on the ground at no outlay of money or labour on the part of the farmer. I consider the fertility thus added to the land a large rent for it; and I get that rent in cash in the increase in the two succeeding crops of corn. Clover is the thing for hogs in summer, and clover sod corn the thing for hogs in winter.—*John M. Stahl, in Prairie Farmer*.

SHEEP HOUSES.

W. D. Boynton, of Shiocton, Wis., writes as follows to the *Farm and Garden*:

"Judging from what we saw during a recent trip through this part of the State, it seemed as though most farmers had an idea that any place a sheep could crawl into was all that they required in the way of housing. In many cases we saw a sort of half basement under the barn floor, three or four feet high, used for a sheep-stable, and into these low places the sheep were crowded so that there was only forty or fifty cubic feet of air for each animal. These same farmers were willing to allow 900 or 1,000 cubic feet to a horse, and 500 to 600 cubic feet to a cow. According to this appointment a sheep should have at least 150 cubic feet of space.

"In our experience sheep will not bear crowding or close confinement as well as most other animals. The heavy coats they wear would indicate an adaptability to cool, roomy quarters, or even open exposure, rather than small, low pens. They are less troubled with ticks when given plenty of room and pure air. If nothing better can be afforded, a broad pen covered with straw would answer the purpose, and be a great improvement on the 'creep-holes' so common throughout the country."

Half millet and half corn ground fine will make better pork than corn alone. It will have a better proportion of lean, and the pigs will be healthier while fattening. Ground millet is a very appropriate food for young pigs, giving them a large and muscular frame.