

The Ontario and Chicago Fat Stock Shows in Contrast.

BY R. GIBSON.

The fat stock at Chicago was decidedly disappointing from a cattleman's point of view. In the first place, he was made to feel like an intruder as soon as within the doors; for it was evident at first glance that the stock were only a side-show to the big circus, and this did not materialize as expected. The "bon ton" with the four-in-hands did not turn out a la Madison Square Garden. The reserved boxes were not filled with Chicago first families, so the stale old Hippodrome and Racing Dogs fell flat upon the old habits of these shows. But to the show proper. Comparing it with Guelph, I find that there were 48 head of cattle at Chicago, against 55 at the latter:—Shorthorns, 13 to 12; Herefords, 8 to 4; Angus, 7 to 2; Galloways, 0 to 4; Devons, 8 to 2, and Grades, 12 to 31.

Now, as to quality, Guelph decidedly leads in the Shorthorn class. Both the white steers in two-year-old class were decidedly better than any shown in Chicago, as is also Crerar's white heifer. The best of the lot was the over-done Whiskers, owned by that inimitable showman, "Billy Potts," a decided steal both in his class and again in Sweepstakes. Smith's steer, though 95 days younger, scales within 36 lbs. as much as Whiskers, and was smoother and leveler all over. Oke's Snowball was also a better steer, inasmuch as he was not loaded down with blubber, but carried plenty of natural flesh of firm quality, evenly distributed; and when it comes to real quality and neatness, the greatest weight in smallest superficies, Crerar's white three-year-old daughter of Indian Chief was decidedly superior to anything shown at Chicago, except, possibly, the two crack Herefords, and they would have had to be looking and feeling at their best, as she was just as neat and sappy, but lacked a little in handling.

In Herefords, Chicago decidedly leads, as I consider Cherry Brandy one of the best I have ever seen, and he only just beats H. Fluck's Percy (who did not show well at first, being off his feed and feverish in feet), the latter having the thicker loin, but is a trifle bare on shoulder; but they were a grand pair.

There were no Galloways at Chicago; had there been it would have taken a gem of the first water to have beaten Kough's heifer. In my opinion, the best and most profitable butcher's animals on exhibition were grades. While in these classes, at Chicago, Hereford grades won all before them, at Guelph Shorthorns did the same. The Hereford two-year-old would have been a worthy competitor of Rennie's heifer (weighing near 1,700 lbs., and sold for \$130), and the issue would be very doubtful, but in the younger classes Chicago decidedly scores; no such youngster as Van Natta's Tom Reid was to be found.

SHEEP.

As far as sheep are concerned, Guelph fairly smothered the Windy City. Take away the Ontario exhibit from Chicago,—what remains? Not a single ribbon. Not a third prize could have been won at Guelph by any American sheep shown at Chicago—except the Merinos had a class to themselves, and then they would have had no competition. John Rutherford, who did so well West, had to be content with five firsts here, against 17 there.

SWINE.

Would be hard to compare. In numbers, I should think the Guelph entries, 240, would be more than three times as many, and, as far as I am capable of judging, the quality fully equal to anything there. Todd's young Chester Whites were certainly very fat—fatter than anything here; but of what avail; they would not fetch more than three cents a lb. in the market here, our buyers wanting something besides lard.

In summing up, Guelph had decidedly the better show. While honors were easy as far as cattle are concerned, in sheep and swine our cousins were not in it. Now, why is it that Chicago can't get up a show equal to the Royal City? Some will say because feeders did not have sufficient notice, and that they did not prepare. My own opinion is that the management is all wrong, and that as long as it is tacked on to the tail end of a horse show, it can never rise to the dignity of a Smithfield or a Guelph. Let a fat stock show be run entirely on its own merits; then, if the people of Chicago won't patronize it, move to some less pretentious city, and then let it die the death it deserves if still unsuccessful. If the West can't interest the people sufficiently without introducing the catch-penny, stale jumping exhibitions, let the East try, but never let it go forth to the world that a stock show cannot be held in the U. S., successfully, unless a circus performance is made the chief attraction. That it is so looked upon at Chicago is pretty evident, for the anathemas were just as loud and just as deep from the heavy horse stables as from the cattle pens. They were not an attraction, consequently were not paraded in the ring, and being stabled in dark stalls, in such out-of-the-way places, many were never seen by the public.

STOCK.

Essays on Swine Breeding and Management Criticized.

BY MR. J. C. SNELL, BEFORE THE DOMINION SWINE BREEDERS' ASSOCIATION, AT GUELPH.

When I was elected critic of the Essays on Swine Breeding and Management, in our report for 1893, I feared I had not been assigned a pleasant task, but I am glad to find so little room for adverse criticism, because I would at any time rather commend than complain. Yet, there are a few points in some of the papers upon which there are honest differences of opinion amongst practical men, and I think it is well to refer to some of these, with a view to drawing out discussion upon them, and of possibly reaching a conclusion which may be generally satisfactory and safe; and here let me say that if I make no reference to some of the essays, it is not because I consider them unworthy of notice, but because they are so good as to be beyond criticism.

RIGHT STAMP AND RIGHT MANAGEMENT.

The first paper on the list is that of my friend James Anderson, of Guelph, whose views largely coincide with my own upon many points, and especially one, namely, that success in swine breeding for profit depends not so much upon the breed as upon the "right stamp" of the breed and the right management or treatment after you have secured the right stamp. There are bad, good, better and best in all the breeds, and if we all would favor "the survival of the fittest," and act as we believe, that the "best is none too good," almost any of the breeds can be so improved by selection as to come near enough to the desired type for all practical and profitable purposes, without engaging in a war of extermination, though perhaps not without bloodshed. It is refreshing to find a man who has the courage to run a tilt at the conclusions of the professors at the Agricultural College, and Mr. Anderson takes issue with them on the question of raw versus cooked food for fattening hogs. This is a question upon which there is much difference of opinion, and it would be well if it could be definitely settled which is the more profitable. I think it safe to say that one experiment is not sufficient to settle such a question, especially when the experiment is conducted by different men, one of whom may not have shown as good judgment in the manner of feeding as the other, for it is well known that one man, with the same kind and quantity of food, may by judicious feeding, as to regularity and distribution, produce very much better results than another man with the same facilities, who lacks in these essentials of management. Much also depends upon the style of the pigs, their disposition to take on flesh and to make growth.

While I have never made any carefully conducted experiments to settle this question, I am free to say, from what experience I have had, that it seems to have settled itself in my mind that as a rule it is more profitable to give the food in a raw state. When the extra labor and the value of fuel if taken into account, I am quite persuaded it will not pay to cook food for pigs, and I am not sure that they will, as a rule, fatten more rapidly or make greater weight for the food consumed.

Mr. Anderson makes the statement that barley is a first-class feed for fattening hogs. This is a point that I think would bear some discussion, and as I have had very little experience in feeding barley, since I do not grow any, I would like to learn which is the best way of feeding barley. Of course, I take it that ground barley is meant, but whether it is best to feed it dry, or soaked in water, or freshly mixed with water or swill, is what I would like to have settled.

THE MANAGEMENT OF SOWS.

In the paper written by W. A. Cowie, Valens, Ont., on "The sow and her litter," the only statement I would criticize is that "the sow, at farrowing, should be from ten to twelve months old." I take it that the writer did not intend to convey the impression that this is the best age for the best results. My experience teaches me that older sows produce stronger litters, and as a rule make better nurses, and I think farmers as a rule are too ready to kill the old sow and try a younger one. As long as a sow is doing satisfactory work it is best to keep her at it, for the young ones are untried and consequently uncertain. I am persuaded that if the sow produces her first litter at from 15 to 18 months old, she will with the same treatment grow larger, and have laid the foundations of a stronger constitution. Certainly I think it safe to say they should not be bred to produce at a younger age than 12 months.

I have noticed in several of the papers in our report on the management of the sow and her litter at weaning time, it is recommended to wean a part of the litter first, say the stronger pigs, and the remainder in a few days later. I am not sure that this is the best practice, and would invite discussion on this point. I have never followed this rule, and have had no experience of injurious results to the sow. For the comfort and safety of the sow, I think it is well to let her return to the pigs once or twice, say on the second and fourth day after separation, but my idea is that every pig has settled down to one teat, and that if a part of the litter is removed, the pigs remaining with the sow will only suck the teats they have been used to, and that the sow will continue to secrete milk in all her teats, possibly to the injury of those which are not relieved.

In the essay of Dr. Ormsby, on "The sow and how to treat her," I find this statement: "That while it is generally supposed that a sow will farrow almost on the exact day she is due, I do not find it so. I find the time varies much with different sows, some running as much as ten days over the expected time." Now, while I do not doubt this for a moment, I will say that from my experience I have found that as a general rule a sow that has had the best treatment, that has had plenty of exercise and access to the earth or some substitute to this, such as ashes, charcoal and roots, will farrow almost on the exact day she is due, and when she goes from six to ten days over her time, I have little hope of seeing a strong litter of pigs. I have known them to go ten and twelve days over time with spring litters, but almost invariably the pigs have been weak and flabby, and have lived only from a few minutes to a few hours. I have never had a case of a fall litter coming more than four days late, and then never in the condition of helplessness that I have described in the case of spring litters that have gone over time, and I can only attribute the difference to the fact that in summer the sows have more natural conditions—that is, abundant exercise and free access to mother earth.

HANDLING YOUNG PIGS.

Mr. C. W. Neville and several other writers advise, at the time young pigs are born, taking them away from the sow, placing them in a box or basket, and returning them at intervals for nourishment. Now, I think that in very cold weather, or in a building where the temperature is too low for comfort and safety, and in special cases where the sow is very restless, this practice is all right; but I feel sure that, as a general rule, it is safer and better when the temperature and surroundings are all right to let nature have its course, and that the less meddling that is done the better it is for all concerned. If the sow has had proper treatment before she is due to farrow, having had exercise and such food as to keep her bowels regular and free, a quiet place, comfortably warm, and scanty litter of some short material, and protection from the sides of the pen, she will, in nine cases out of ten, attend to her own business better than any one can do it for her. Of course, there are exceptional cases, which require exceptional treatment, and it is well to be on the lookout and provide for the management of such cases.

A POINT IN WINTER FEEDING.

Mr. Sleightholm, in his excellent paper, brings out a point which I think is worthy of consideration and of commendation. In the treatment of fall litters of pigs during the cold weather of winter, he says: "The feed should be fed dry, since wet feed loads the stomach with a cold mass, which is decidedly injurious." My own opinion is, that a great many pigs are ruined in winter by feeding large quantities of wet food, that is, a meal on shorts mixed with cold water. The pigs overload their stomachs with this cold mess, then lie in their beds and shiver. Nothing can be more likely to produce indigestion and derangement. I think that the troughs should be divided, so that in cold weather the dry food can be fed in one department and drink given in the other, so that the pigs can take it at their pleasure.

WHEN PIGS SHOULD BE FARROWED.

Mr. James Sharp, in his papers, says: "I look upon it as of very little account at what season of the year the pigs are farrowed, if one has a warm pen." My own opinion is, that there are just two seasons at which it is most profitable to have the pigs farrowed—that is in early spring and early autumn. Pigs born in March or April can soon be let out upon the ground in fine days for exercise and the variety of condiments which instinct teaches them to look for, for even a little pig "wants the earth," and may be fattened for the late summer and early fall market, and, if kept for breeding purposes, will be a good age in November and December—the boars for service and the sows for being bred to farrow when a year old. Fall pigs for best results should be born in September and early in October, when they can have abundant exercise on the ground to strengthen and develop bone and constitution to stand the close confinement necessarily incident to fattening pigs in winter. Pigs which are born in the late fall and winter months are liable to get stunted, even in very warm pens, or to go off their legs largely from want of exercise; and if they do not get stunted, it is reasonable to say they cannot have the necessary exercise to develop bone and muscle to the best degree, which is very essential in the case of those which are to be kept for breeding purposes. September and October pigs, again, are of good age in April and May to breed for early fall litters, or to market for pork in the early summer months, when, as a rule, prices are higher than at any other season of the year.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Nova Scotia School of Horticulture.

The Nova Scotia School of Horticulture at Wolfville, N. S., will re-open on Monday, January 7th, with a four months' course in horticulture especially adapted to young farmers and farmers' sons who can attend during the winter months. The lectures during the course are of such a nature as can be fully understood. No examinations are required for admission. Circulars and any information desired may be obtained from the Principal,

PROF. E. F. FAVILLE.