

hind in quality of their exhibits, and, with more experience in feeding and fitting, will prove, in the near future, worthy contestants, and put our former Ontarian on his mettle. Will refer more to sheep further on.

Swine were a fairly good all-round average, but too thick-fat from the Ontario standard of excellence.

The universally-expressed opinion was that the fair registered a marked improvement in com-



Canadian-bred Berkshire Sow.
A Toronto first-prize winner.

parison with past ones. Their excellent building, to which a large addition was built recently, will soon be found too small. The all-prevailing topic of conversation during the fair week was the need of sheep in Manitoba, as a decided change in the present methods of operating farms is forcing itself upon the minds of many. It is felt by the outstanding majority that live stock, and especially sheep, must go hand in hand with grain-growing. While cattle and hogs must be increased in numbers, it is the sheep, to aid in checking weeds and add fertility to the soil, which is claiming the greatest attention. Sheep talk was constantly in the air. The marked decrease in yields of wheat is a condition which is forcing itself on the attention, and that is leading many to the determination to own a flock of sheep as soon as possible. They have already proved themselves most beneficial, as related by Mr. McGregor, who for years borrowed hundreds of sheep from a Brandon live-stock dealer, to run on his fallows, to subdue weeds, thereby making one profit for himself, and another for the lender in increased flesh and weight. By comparing notes with many, some having flocks, and others aiming soon to have sheep on their farms, it is confidently expected that in a short time Ontario sheep-breeders will find Manitoba one of the best available markets for good sheep.

The standard set in horses will be closely followed in sheep. In discussing the subject, the readily-expressed opinion was that preference would be given to real-good animals in laying flock foundations. Had it been thought proper, while doing work for the Department, to solicit orders for next fall's trading, a brisk business could have been done. It was considered better to attempt devising a scheme whereby wholesale car-load operations could be started, with united Ontario breeders at one end, and the lots sent Westward put up at public auction, and sold to the highest bidder. It was freely talked over, and generally approved of. More may be stated later on, when fully considered from the Ontario end by our associations.

We need not be surprised at the anticipated change to more live stock on the Manitoba farm. Taking the past nine years' average of wheat per acre (the tenth, back in 1900, being less than half a crop), a period the best in the Province's wheat-growing history, it is not assuring to find that, with 1901 giving an average of 25 bushels per acre, 1902 with 26 bushels, the average there has been a steady decrease, until last year gave but 17 bushels as an average. While discussing this most serious trend of results, the question was asked, "How many bushels are required, at the average price, to pay cost of production?" After considerable hesitation, 13 bushels was given, and the statement went unchallenged. It was easy to figure out that, with a yield decrease during most favorable seasons, of 8 to 9 bushels in nine years, only six more years will pass till, with proportionate decrease, the average wheat crop of Manitoba, like the average dairy cow of Ontario, will be handled at a loss.

The cultivated soil, so far as seen, is far too good, and conditions too favorable, to justify the tiller of the soil in Manitoba to so continue robbing his land of plant food, and return nothing, as to make the near-by future as dark as the present is rosy. Not many years have passed since it was a question with the many as to how soon would they, like not a few in their midst, become so discouraged, by inability to meet obligations, as to move out. The trying situation suddenly brightened some nine or ten years ago. Now, again, danger is present, but from another source. Formerly, unfavorable seasons and other

hindrances made the trying time. Now the danger arises from the fact of nine successive favorable seasons causing the soil to yield so bounteously year after year, as to draw on the natural stored-up fertility, and thereby lessen the power of production. It is a case of "riding the willing horse to his death." Here is where man should do his part, but has failed, resting content with drawing to the limit on the present, and letting the future take care of itself.

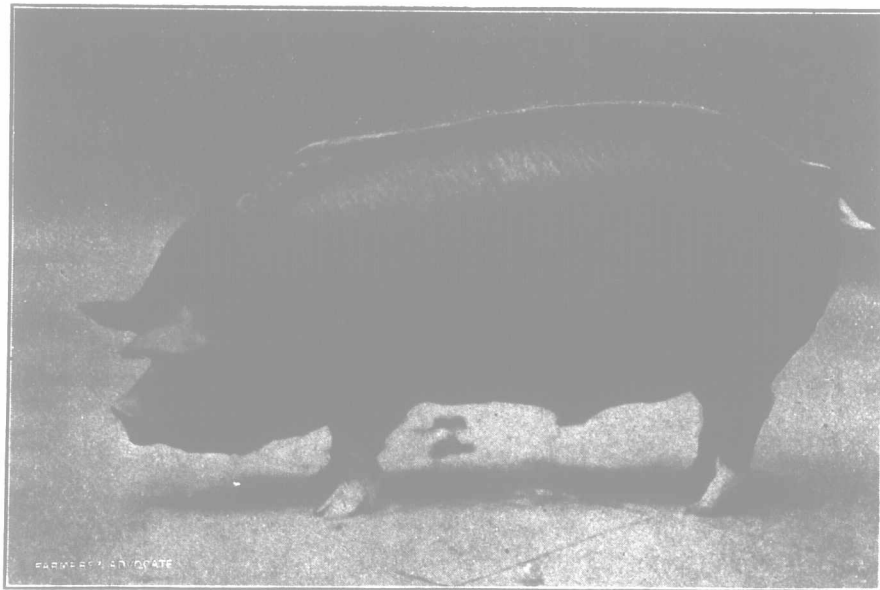
The possible excellent future of the Province depends very largely on how soon the present occupants will adopt such methods as will maintain and restore fertility to the rapidly-exhausting soil. It appears too good a country to spoil, even for a time, by thoughtless mismanagement.

Victoria Co., Ont.

JOHN CAMPBELL.

Berkshires.

The Berkshire is one of the oldest of the British breeds of swine. It derived its name from the County of Berkshire, in England, where its early improvement was principally effected, and the breed made popular. The original Berkshire, like most of the breeds in their early history, was a coarse animal, of varying color—sandy, white, or reddish brown, spotted with black. A considerable improvement was made in the breed in the eighteenth century, Chinese, Siamese and Neapolitan crosses, it is reported, having been used in the process, more especially the first mentioned. In the early years of the nineteenth century, by judicious selection of the fittest, a marked uniformity of characteristics was effected, the color being fixed, as a rule, as black, with white points, an attractive feature, which has been maintained with little variation, but is not adhered to as closely as at one period in its history, when the demand for correct markings be-



Berkshire Barrow.

Winner of championship as best hog, any breed, at Smithfield Fat-stock Show, 1909. Shown by H. R. H. Prince Christian.

came a fad, and led to the neglect of more important qualities. The demand for an extremely short, dished face, with the accompanying heavily-fleshed jaw, also at one time became a hobby of breeders of this, as of the Yorkshire and some other breeds, still too closely followed in the United States, but largely discarded by English and Canadian breeders catering to the British market, which calls for the long-sided type, producing bacon, with a desirable proportion of lean meat. The modern improved Berkshire fills the bill for this requirement admirably, and, being of a quiet disposition, and the best of grazers, can be raised and finished for the market more economically than other breeds, and producing a quality of flesh unexcelled for flavor and palatability.

As now bred, the Berkshires, at the age at which hogs at present are principally marketed, weigh, as a rule, as heavy as any of the other breeds, though, being shorter-legged, and nearer the ground, they may not look as large. The breeders have, in recent years, greatly improved the breed by giving more attention to lengthening the form, by selection and mating of the longer-bodied specimens, giving more outdoor exercise on pasturage, feeding less of rich, concentrated foods, and more of the less-fattening but more growth-producing and muscle-making foods, such as oats and barley, supplemented with roots in winter, and clover and rape in summer. Great improvement has been effected in producing smoothness of shoulders, the shoulders in the improved Berkshire fitting neatly into the loins, and in line with the sides.

VALUE IN CROSSING.

None of the breeds have been more useful than the Berkshire in grading up and improving the common stock of the country, while crossed with

other breeds, they have been, and are, especially valued for the production of vigorous and profitable feeders. They have proved of great value in refining the coarser breeds and improving the quality of the flesh, the lean and fat being well intermixed. As to their breeding qualities, or prolificness, while they may not, as a rule, produce as large litters as some of the breeds, the larger and more lengthy class of Berkshire sows produce good-sized litters, not infrequently farrowing ten to a dozen pigs at a birth, and the sows are, as a rule, good nurses and quiet mothers. The Berkshires are second to none in constitution, healthfulness, and the power to resist and repel diseases. They are attractive and spirited, yet quiet, and they have a good quality of bone, upright pasterns, and strong feet. Their color is a strong point in their favor, as a black skin will not blister, mange or crack under a hot sun, as a white skin is liable to do.

The Berkshires have retained their popularity remarkably well in England, the home of the breed, and our best market.

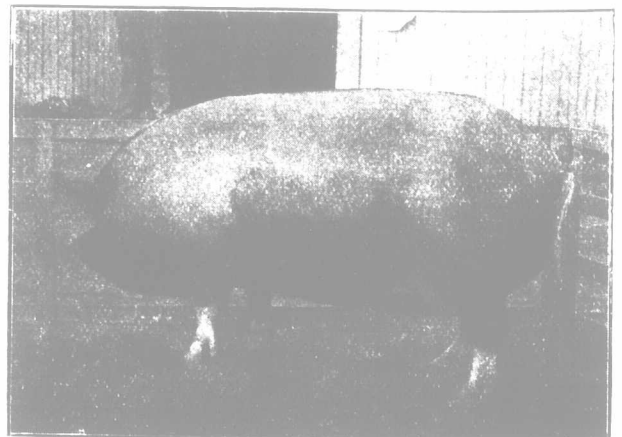
The championship for the best single hog of any breed at the Smithfield Show, in 1907, was a Berkshire. In 1908, at the same show, the grand-champion pen of two of any breed were Berkshires, weighing, at 11 months and 2 weeks, 962 pounds, while the reserve pair were cross-bred, Berkshire and Middle White. The supreme championship for best single pig, any breed, under one year, at the 1909 Smithfield Show, was a Berkshire, which at 11 months and 2 weeks old weighed 529 pounds. The principal points in the standard for Berkshires are: Head moderately short, broad between the eyes, face slightly dished, snout broad, neck medium to short, ear upright on young pigs, good size, inclined to droop slightly with age, brisket wide, hair fine and soft, inclined to thickness in the male. Shoulders smooth and even on top, and in line with sides; skin smooth and pliable; back moderate width, strong, straight, or slightly arched; side moderately strong and deep, and of nearly even thickness above and below; flank thick, full, and low-down on leg; loin full and wide; ham deep, and holding thickness well down to hock, tail well set up on line with back; legs and feet short, straight and strong, set well apart, with hoofs nearly erect, and capable of holding good weight; size all that is possible without loss of quality or symmetry; style attractive, spirited, indicative of good breeding and constitutional vigor; color black, with white on lower part of legs, on face and tip of tail, a white fringe on one or both ears, or on inside of

ear, a white splash on jaw or forearm, or a few white hairs on any part, is not a serious objection. In general appearance, Berkshires are of good size, fairly compact in form, regular and even in outline, and easy in movement.

J. C. S.

Sow's Milk.

For the first weeks of a pig's life the mother's milk is its drink, as well as food, and, therefore,



An English Berkshire Sow.

in caring for suckling sows, it should be the aim to so feed them that milk of only medium richness will be furnished, instead of a limited supply of that which is extremely rich, the latter being less healthful, and more liable to cause thumps, scours and unsatisfactory growth. It is only a law of

nature gains other furnish for the farm, which parati giving the m tem c pound an av parisc fats, in Am

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