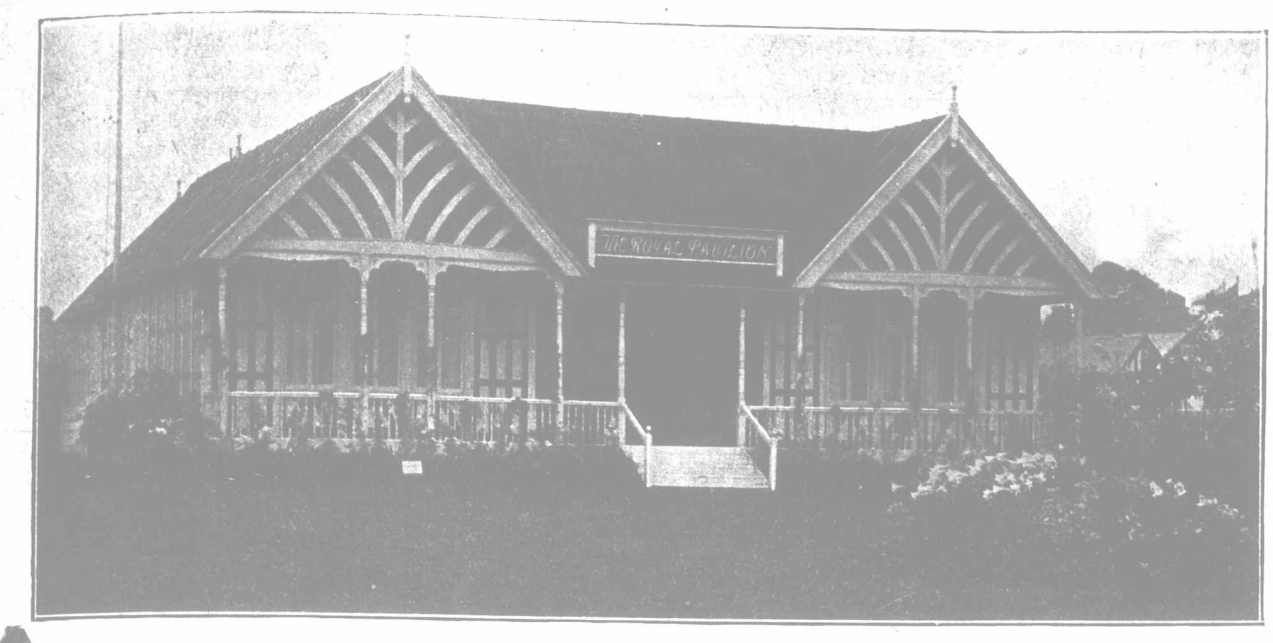


The Royal Pavilion at the Royal Show, Doncaster.

LIVE STOCK.

Production of Early Lambs.

In a bulletin recently issued from the Agricultural Experiment Station in connection with Cornell University, an interesting report is given of the care and management of their early lamb flock, of the ewes which produce them, and of the fancy prices realized in the larger city markets for what are called Hothouse Lambs, a term which, however, has no reference to the quarters in which the business is conducted at Cornell, the best success having been attained in quarters in no way artificially heated. A demand has been created and high prices are available for fat lambs from December to May, weighing about 35 pounds when dressed. The lambs are sold by the carcass and not by the pound, and in the eight seasons in which the experiment has been carried on the prices have ranged from $4 for a lamb sold late in the season to $12.50 for a prime lamb sold at the top of the market. When the ewes are turned to pasture, ordinarily about May 15th, the rams have been turned with them, and the flock allowed to run together until the fall, when it is put into winter quarters. The flock has been made up of representatives of several breeds, both pure-bred and grade. Ordinarily three pure-bred rams, a Hampshire, a Southdown and a Horned Dorset have been allowed to run with the flock.

No particular method of getting the ewes to breed early has been followed, since it has never been clearly shown that one method has proved better than another. The only precaution taken has been to see that the ewes are in as good condition as possible when turned out, and the rams young and active.

The results from this treatment have been good. No attention has been paid to what cross would be most profitable, since all the lambs have been slaughtered for market and none kept for breeding purposes, the flock being maintained by purchase. The lambs have been provided with a separate place for eating their grain, which is usually called a creep, into which the lambs may go but the ewes cannot. The lambs usually grow rapidly enough to be ready for slaughter in seventy to seventy-five days from birth. They should be made to grow fast enough to gain at least one-half pound per day during this time, and to reach a slaughter weight of 45 to 48 pounds at the end of the time. The approved method of slaughtering, with illustrations from photographs, are given in the bulletin.

The time to market in order to obtain the highest price is before March 4th, as a steady decline generally occurs after that date. This means that in order to top the market the lambs must be born in January. The average up to March 4th for all the eight seasons of the experiment has not varied widely from $10 per carcass, and the top price has been $12.50. So far as the product of the Cornell flock is concerned, out of a total of 261 lambs raised as winter lambs in eight years, 60, or 23 per cent., have been sold before March 4th. There have been born in the eight seasons a total of 401 lambs. Of these 261, or 65.1 per cent., have been marketed as hothouse lambs. This takes into account those that have died at birth as well as those born too late to reach the hothouse-lamb market.

Records of individual ewes in the flock are topped by a grade Dorset, which produced ten lambs in eight seasons, all raised early enough to be disposed of on the hothouse market, where they brought a total of $94. A pure-bred Dorset ewe produced nine lambs in five years, and raised eight of them early enough to be marketed as hothouse lambs. They sold a little below the highest quoted price, bringing a total of $73.52, when if sold at the highest quoted price they would have brought $75.52. A pure-bred Dorset stood third in the list, a Rambouillet fourth, a Delaine fifth, a grade Southdown sixth and a grade Shropshire seventh.

Health of Canadian Live Stock.

Another outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease in England reminds our Winnipeg contemporary, The Farmer's Advocate and Home Journal, that Canada can in a great measure feel grateful for being free from this and other dread diseases affecting live stock that have been a source of immeasurable loss to European farmers, and which they are apparently unable to combat, at least in Continental Europe. The Canadian Government has been and is enforcing very stringent regulations regarding the importation and inspection of live stock from British, European, and in fact all foreign ports, including the United States. So stringent, in fact, are they, that many importers complain bitterly from time to time regarding losses sustained through these regulations. Even so, diseased animals are reported as having gained entrance to Canada from time to time, and some stockmen advocate even more thorough inspection.

It would undoubtedly be a retrograde policy to lower the standard of health or inspection regulations in regard to imported live stock, even though from time to time splendid individual animals are lost through our present system of inspection.

Sheep.

The care of a flock of sheep is a job a good deal less sweaty and laborious than the swinging of scythe and hoe in an unending effort to kill off the weeds. In the presence of such a flock the weeds rapidly disappear and the grasses take possession of the ground. Mutton always commands a profitable price, and the combined returns from mutton and wool, added to the services of the sheep in keeping down weeds and enriching the land, will always make the flock a highly valuable contributor to the prosperity of the farm—[C. R. Barns.

"Where Farmers Find Sheep a Necessity."

Because of the recent agitation concerning the declining numbers of sheep kept in Ontario, a special amount of interest is being taken in this industry by the agricultural papers. This is shown by the number of articles which constantly appear, setting forth the various advantages.

The British farmer finds it profitable to keep sheep on his high-priced arable land in competition with horses, cattle and swine; and what is more than this, he must compete with the frozen mutton and lamb trade from New Zealand. The price of this, retail, is almost four cents a pound less.

What is it, then, which prevents the Canadian farmer from keeping a flock of sheep upon his farm? Why cannot sheep in this country also compete with the other stock of the farm? There is no doubt, one disadvantage which we have here, namely, having to house them in winter. But sheep need less warmth, and are therefore housed more easily and less expensively than other stock which it pays the farmer to keep.

One fault seems to be that farmers think sheep require no attention. On the contrary, no class of stock will more readily respond to attention or inattention than sheep. It is true that they require less than other stock, but what they do need should be done well.

Sheep return 80 per cent. of the fertility in their food to the soil; their manure is also ready spread in the most economical manner. The sheep is a browser; it eats classes of food which other animals neglect, and is one of the best agents for keeping the farm free from noxious weeds and shrubs.

A few notes, the results of observations while on a mixed farm in the lowlands of Scotland, might be of use to a sheep-owner in Canada.

Upon this farm of 500 acres arable land, a breeding stock of 180 ewes was kept. These were the Border-Leicester-Cheviot cross. This cross gives an early-maturing mutton-producing sheep of excellent quality. These ewes are put to Oxford rams to give lambs of greater weight. Most of the lambs from these ewes are fed until the following spring, being kept as long as the Swedes last. A few that can be fattened early are fed during the summer, but competition with the earlier mountain breeds discourages this. A further supply of lambs is bought in the fall and fed through the winter. These, together with the lambs raised on the farm, and the ewes fattened off after the fourth crop of lambs, give a total of nearly six hundred sheep fattened each year.

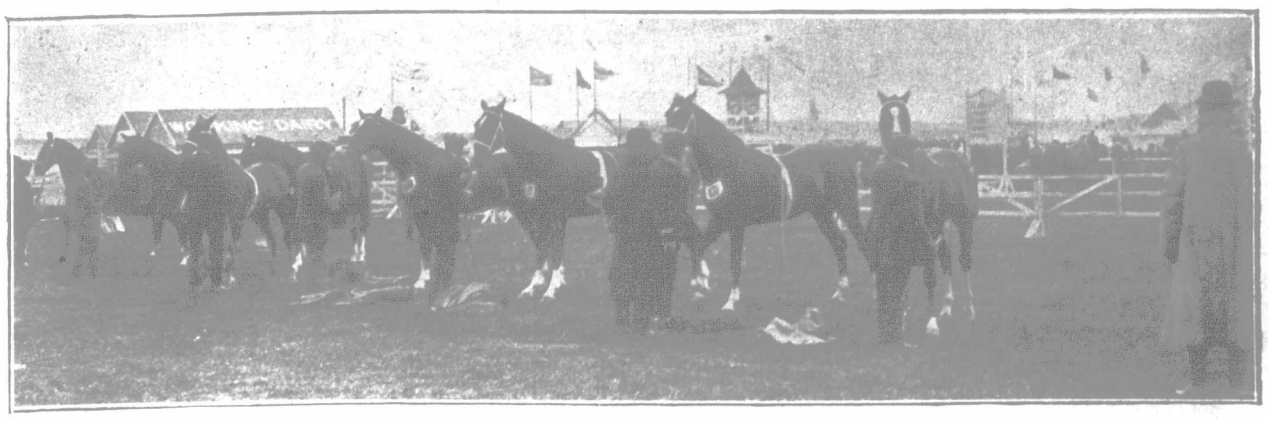
This farm would also fatten a number of steers, besides selling a considerable amount of grain.

Thus, it would seem that sheep are not considered unprofitable animals in Britain.

It is considered very important to have the ewes in a thriving condition when put to the ram in the fall. After weaning, the ewes are put on rather bare pasture; sometimes a pasture on the hills is rented, as far away as eighteen miles. They are kept on this until about a month before the ram is put amongst them. They are then brought down to the lower lands, where the pasture is better and a good bite of clover can be obtained. This will make the ewes thrive well, and so they will get stronger lambs and a greater percentage of doubles.

Many farmers do not seem to realize the importance of a constant supply of water for sheep, especially when getting no roots. Where a running stream is not available, it is a good idea to dig down to one of the main tile drains in the field, take out a couple of tiles and sink a trough there. In this way, running water is obtained all through the summer. This is a common method adopted in Scotland. However, in Canada, it would be necessary to protect it well during the winter.

A supply of rock salt in boxes in each pasture field is always accessible. J. G. B.



Judging Hackneys at the Royal Show, Doncaster, England, July, 1912.