

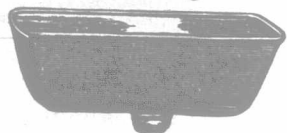
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The Value of Silage in the Winter Ration for the Breeding Flock.

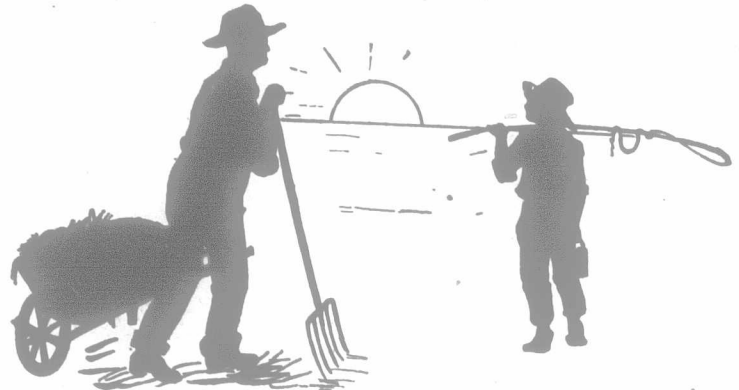
Editor "The Farmer's Advocate":

There has recently been issued from the New Hampshire Agricultural Experiment Station a timely bulletin on the value of corn silage in the winter ration for the breeding flock. The purpose of this bulletin is to present in as clear and concise form as possible the results of some wintering rations for eleven-months-old female lambs. The experiment as reported covered two winters, 1912-13 and 1913-14, and in it corn silage and roots were compared when fed to the flock. The lambs used were, for the most part, descended by the first or second cross from Rambouillet ewes bred to Hampshire, Shropshire, and Dorset rams. The lambs, which were almost a year old, were all about the same size, and were placed five in each lot, and similar crosses were placed in the several lots so as to obviate as much as possible differences due to breed characteristics. The lambs used were placed on preliminary feed for a period of two weeks before the experiment proper began, so that they would become accustomed to the respective rations before any records were taken. No difficulty was experienced in working the lambs on to the silage ration, but it was found a good plan to sprinkle some grain, such as oats and bran, over the silage, as they seemed to start eating it sooner. The alfalfa used in the experiment was choice second cutting; the silage was from a Dent corn and owing to the shortness of the growing season, was put into the silo in both years in a more or less premature stage. As a result the silage was rather sour, and lacked a little in palatability. All the feed was carefully weighed before being fed. The lots were fed regularly at 6 a. m. and 4 p. m. daily. Water and salt were accessible at all times. The lambs were weighed every seventh day at 3 o'clock, individual weights being taken throughout the entire feeding period.

The daily rations received by the respective lots were: Lot 1—Alfalfa hay, 1 lb.; native hay, ½ lb.; roots, 2½ lbs., and cracked corn, ½ lb. Lot 2—Alfalfa hay, 1 lb.; native hay, ½ lb.; corn silage, 2 lbs., and cracked corn, ½ lb. Lot 1, receiving 2½ lbs. roots during the first experiment, made an average gain of 7.6 pounds, and during the second winter the lot similarly fed, made an average gain of 4.7 pounds per head. Lot 2, receiving 2 lbs. corn silage in the ration during the first experiment, made an average gain of 4.4 pounds per head, while those fed on the second test lost 0.7 pounds. In concluding the bulletin, the writer draws attention to the fact that the lambs wintered on a ration in which roots furnished the succulent tons, made a slightly larger gain than those receiving silage in the ration, but that silage is a source of cheaper supply of green roughage than roots in the winter ration, silage being valued at \$3.50 per ton, and roots (mangels and turnips) at \$5 per ton. From the experiment, the place of corn silage in the sheep winter ration has been justified, in so far as it not only provides succulence, but at the same time supplies the animal with considerable valuable food nutrients. Roots are greatly relished by sheep, and it was found that with due care and judgment, no deleterious effects would follow the feeding of silage. In the Dominion Department of Agriculture, Bulletin No. 12, entitled Sheep Husbandry in Canada, J. B. Spencer, B.S.A., the author, says:

"Silage is fed to sheep on many farms. When well preserved it is relished by the animals, and affords a valuable succulent food. From three to four pounds per head daily is about as much as experienced sheepmen care to feed. Fed in larger quantities, or if too acid, it is liable to cause serious indigestion. At this rate, silage fed with clover hay comprises an excellent ration for wintering ewes, and when to this a grain ration is added, a profitable fattening ration is secured."

"At the Wisconsin Experiment Station, corn silage was found to be about equal to mangels for ewes rearing lambs. The lambs made slightly better gains when roots were fed to their dams, but the silage was produced at a slightly lower cost. The feeding value of good silage and roots for sheep, according to experi-



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