

that by far too many young bulls are tried prematurely, to the superseding of proved sires. But the explanation of the practice seems to lie in this position—that Shorthorn tribes in good repute produce more thousand bulls of fashionable lineage in a year than Hereford or Aberdeen do of tens, so that there is always large choice of Shorthorn bulls. Whilst Angus and Herefords are now under the influence of a keen foreign demand, the young bulls are drafted away to customer as fast as they are ready for use. In consequence of this removal, the old stagers in these breeds must often be retained in service in order to let the young ones go. But in spite of this explanation, it still seems true the state of opinion is not wise which determines that, except in one or two herds, an elderly shorthorn bull is unsaleable at anything beyond butcher's prices. For, as it seems to us, the use of bulls advanced in years has a distinct tendency to reduce stature, and to produce small, compact animals—i.e., the stamp which is now most in demand. And therefore we believe Mr. Housman has done well to call attention to the neglect of old bulls; for a freer use of mature sires would do something to improve Shorthorns. The show bull of the last three seasons, Lord Zetland was begotten by a sire more than 10 years old; and Mr. Hendley's exhibits are mostly by Sir A. Ingram, who is not much younger.

### SILOS.

In June last we erected, and the following month filled a small experimental silo, and the results of our experience we gladly place at the disposal of your readers.

The building, inside measure, is 18 feet long, 9 feet wide, and 13 feet deep—ends circular—built in the side of rapidly rising ground, close to the cowhouse. So that while one end is sunk about 8 feet into the ground, the other is on a level with the surface. A drain pipe, a few inches below floor level, is carried round the building on the outside, emptying at the low end, the drain above the pipes being filled with stones to ground level. Floor is of concrete, of fine gravel and cement, having a slight fall to one end, in which is sunk a small cesspool with grating over, from which a lead pipe is carried outside, and on the end of which is a tap. Walls of stone, faced inside with brick to the height of 13 feet, and on this a coat of plaster of cement, finished to a perfectly true and smooth surface.

A door at the end where the surface is highest, and in the gable is placed for filling, and at the other end, next the cowhouse, another is placed at floor level for emptying—the latter bricked up and plastered inside, but opened when the first section of ensilage was cut down to its level. Roof covering slates. Estimated capacity 40 ton, but experience proved this under the mark, and we find we have space for 45 ton. Weights

used are of cement concrete, 1½ cwt. being put on each foot super.

In the first week of July the first filling of 15 ton of very coarse grass unchaffed, was put in. A heavy rain had fallen in the morning, and the grass was wet as it well could be. It was evenly packed, and well trodden down and weighted as above, same day. At intervals of a week three more fillings were put in, the weights being replaced after each filling, the usual 2 inch boarding being placed between weights and grass. The last three fillings were with grass of good quality, and put in when the weather was dry. I may here remark that the drainage from the grass was so trifling that I consider the cesspool pipe from it to be unnecessary, and am inclined to believe that where water is found in any quantity it must get into the silo by the floor or walls being non-water-proof.

In the first week in December the silo was opened, when 2 or 3 inches on the top was found to be mouldy; but with this exception the grass was in a state of perfect preservation. It was offered to eighteen milch cows, and some five or six took to it at once, and by the end of the week the whole ate it with relish.

We cannot, however, as some other experimenters have done, report any increased flow of milk by cows eating it; but this may be accounted for by the different modes of feeding previous to the use of ensilage. We can easily imagine, if sparingly fed, or wholly on dry food, that succulent food, as ensilage is, would be likely to increase the milk. But be that as it may, we have not been able to increase it. Previous to being put on ensilage, the cows had a mixture of bean, oat, and maize meal; 28 lbs. of mangel per day, and good hay *ad libitum*. Mangel was discontinued when ensilage was given, but in other respects food the same. During the first week they lost milk, but by the end of the second had nearly recovered, but up to now have not exceeded the quantity given when on mangel diet. The butter from the milk is excellent.

We abstain from detailed figures as to cost of silo and its filling, but we are on safe ground in saying that the cost of erecting a silo in a substantial manner, perfect in detail, need not exceed £1 for every ton of its capacity; that is, at 5 per cent. on outlay, the rent to store a ton of ensilage would not exceed 1s. per year, and in average circumstances probably much less.

Again, the cost of securing ensilage will not exceed the cost of making hay; our experience enables us to say it costs less. Moreover, we can only make hay when the sun shines, whereas with the other the sun is a factor that does not influence the operation. This being so the question converges to a single and very narrow issue—viz., this, the relative value of a given quantity of grass made into hay, good or bad as chance may befall, as compared with the same, preserved uniformly good, in a silo.

We must confess that none of the published experiments on this point that we have seen are altogether satisfactory. Yet enough is known to lift the matter from the region of doubt, and to render this matter of grass preserving a question of the very first importance, alike to owners and occupiers of land.—W. J. M. in *Agricultural Gazette*.

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### The JOURNAL OF AGRICULTURE

—is published monthly by—

A. & W. MACKINLAY,  
No. 10, GRANVILLE STREET,  
HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA.

TERMS OF SUBSCRIPTION:

Fifty cents per annum—payable in advance.  
Single copy five cents.