

THE PACKERS AND HOG-BUYING.

IS THE F. O. B. PLAN THE BEST—WOULD COMPETITIVE BUYING AT A LARGE CENTER IMPROVE THINGS?

One day's receipts at the Chicago live-stock market recently totalled 65,000 hogs. Denmark's weekly killings—and they have been much larger than usual the past year—have not come up to this total, 57,000 being the highest yet reached. Canadian packers would be in clover if they could get a run of 65,000 hogs per week. They are only getting about one-quarter of that number each week now, and the prospects of any increase are somewhat remote.

But it is not the size of the daily run of hogs at Chicago that we are interested in just now, but the fact that so many hogs are brought to one center to be sold. The Chicago packer does not have to send men out through the country buying hogs. He secures his supply on the open market in competition with others in the trade. The producer gets the benefit of this competition, or, at least, he knows, when he reads the Chicago market reports, whether the drover has paid a fair price for his hogs or not. The same thing applies to other market centers in the West. Hogs are bought up in the country the same as cattle and sheep, shipped to these live-stock centers, and sold there for what they will bring in the open market.

The marketing of hogs is conducted on a different basis in this country. Some years ago, certain packers, who believed they were not getting their share of the hog supply, engaged men and sent them into the country to buy hogs direct from the farmer. Other packers had to follow suit, and to-day practically all the hog-buying is done by the packer f. o. b. at country points. Those reported as arriving at the live-stock markets are for the most part sold before their arrival. On Toronto market, there is little if any competitive buying of hogs; the same as of cattle or sheep. The drover generally knows where they are going before he ships.

There is nothing radically wrong in this system, and farmers, on the whole, have received perhaps as high prices for their hogs as if they had been sold in open competition at some large market center. But the question is, Has the f. o. b. plan inspired that confidence in the packer's methods that is necessary in a trade of this nature? Is it not responsible, to a large extent, for the feeling that exists of a packers' combine? The packer fixes the price each week which his buyers will pay in the country. The drover buys on this basis, and ships direct to the packing-house. There would be no need for fixing prices in advance when buying on an open market. Of course, the packer would know what market conditions would allow him to pay. But this he could keep to himself, and buy to the best advantage possible. Competition for hogs would force him to pay to the limit, thus safeguarding the producer. Whether the latter fared better or worse by this arrangement, he would not have the same ground for suspecting a combine existed that he seems to have under the present system. The producer would be compelled to study market conditions more closely, and to keep in touch with the supply and demand.

There is another feature of the open-market buying that would be of great benefit to the bacon trade. Quality would count for more than it does on the f. o. b. plan. With the hogs assembled at a central market, the packer could make his selections of selects, lights and fats, and pay accordingly. There is little or no discrimination in buying under the present plan. A farmer has a dozen hogs to sell. Ten of them will grade as select, two of them as lights, and two as fats. He gets the same price for the whole lot, and if there is no incentive to produce the best. If the drover were compelled to sell the hogs he buys in the country in an open market, he would exercise more discrimination in his buying, and the producer of the best grades would get the best price.

It may be that packing-houses, located at so many different centers as they are in Ontario, would not admit of the open-market plan working out satisfactorily. The concerns outside would not care to send buyers to Toronto to secure their hog supply. And yet it might possibly be done with advantage to them. Outside of a limited area in the locality of the packing-house, hogs are shipped long distances to these concerns now, and the freight cost to them would be no greater than if they bought at some market center like Toronto. They could come on the market, make their selections, and if they paid as much as the other fellow, would stand as good a chance of getting the hogs. This thing is done nearly every day on the cattle market. Buyers outside of Toronto who want cattle go there and buy them.

Let the packers establish competitive buying on an open market, and the hogs will come to that center. There is no difficulty about the horse, cattle and sheep trade in this respect. Why should there be any in regard to the hog trade? The drover buys his horses, his cattle

and his sheep as cheaply as he can in the country, and takes his chances on making a profit when he ships them to a market center. He would do the same thing with hogs. And, while the producer might not receive a cent more for his hogs than he is getting under the present system, he would feel that he is getting all they will bring in a competitive market.

"CHRONICLE."

HOG-CHOLERA CONVENTION AT AMES.

At the request of Secretary Wilson, the veterinary representatives of the United States Bureau of Animal Industry from nine of the Middle-West States met at Ames, Iowa, from May 28th to June 7th, in convention, with Dr. Melvin, Chief of the Bureau of Animal Industry, and Dr. Dorsett, Chief of the Bio-Chemistry Section.

Among those present were Dr. Reynolds, of Minnesota; Dr. Richards, of Indiana; Dr. Connaway, of Missouri; Dr. Peters, of Nebraska; and Drs. Niles, McNeil and Stange, of the Iowa Experiment Station. These men have all, either of their own initiative or under direction of the Government, taken a prominent part in furthering the investigation in connection with hog cholera, and on account of the excellence of the results achieved by Dr. McNeil, Ames was chosen as the place of meeting.

From the very beginning, the congress resolved itself into a school of instruction. The main intention throughout was to thoroughly familiarize every man present with this disease and the Government's new and successful method of handling it. Thus, upon their return to their home States, they are fully equipped to cope with the ravaging disease. It was the hope expressed by Dr. Melvin that not only could the disease be kept from spreading, but that it can be eventually eradicated.

In the opening session, Dr. Melvin outlined the work carried out by the Government. For over thirty years, work has been carried on continually

of hog cholera, and it is anticipated that, if properly taken up by the various States, it may mean the saving of hundreds of thousands of dollars annually to farmers, especially in the Central-West States.

FIXING A TYPE.

In his excellent history of Shorthorn cattle, recently published, Mr. James Sinclair gives the following account of the purchase, by Mr. Amos Cruickshank, of Lancaster Comet, the sire of Champion of England (17526), the bull which, more than any other, was influential in forming and fixing the type of the breed most generally approved in the last two or three decades. The result of Mr. Cruickshank's practice of inbreeding was the establishment of a well-fixed type of short-legged, broad-ribbed, thick-fleshed, early-maturing class of cattle:

"In the autumn of 1858, a number of the cows of Sittyton turned out not to be in calf, and it was thought necessary to get a new bull, and a good young red one, if possible, as that was the color most in demand at the time. Amos wrote to Wilkinson, of Lenton, asking if he could supply such an animal. Wilkinson replied he could not, but recommended him to take Lancaster Comet (11,663), then about eight years old, which he offered to let him have at little more than butcher's price. Before accepting the offer, Amos visited the herds of Mark Stewart, Boldon, Towneley, Richard Booth, Dudding, and others, but saw nothing to suit. He therefore wrote Wilkinson to send on the bull, although it was much older than was thought desirable.

"Lancaster Comet had been exposed when four years of age, at Wilkinson's first sale, in 1854, but was bought in by his owner at 42 gs. Wilkinson evidently had a good opinion of him, for he kept him on another four years, and I believe his neighbor, Mr. Sanday, had a hire of him. Lancaster Comet was full of the very best Lenton blood, both sire and dam being by Will Honeycomb. Queen's Roan, his sire, was also a special favorite of Wilkinson's. Lancaster Comet was not a large bull, but a very good one. He was short in his legs, had a capital coat of hair, was very well fleshed, straight above and below, round in his carcass, thick in the fore quarter, well let down in his thighs, with neater hind quarters than his son, Champion of England, but was by no means such a deep, massive animal. He had more spring and activity about him. His eyes were prominent, and he had a good but biggish head, with great long horns, somewhat like those observed in a cross with the West Highlander. These horns didn't stick up; they were well enough placed on his head, but curved round in front, were not particularly thick, neither were they sharp at the point, but were more uniform in diameter than we usually see. The bull was forwarded in November, 1858. Mr. Housman has told us how Amos Cruickshank rode down to the railway to meet the new arrival, and how he felt when he saw the great head and horns lowering upon him over the side of the truck. One earnest look sufficed, and he turned away. Like the Laird of Cockpen,

'Dumfounded he was, but no sigh did he gie'—

or, more probably, he did give a sigh, perhaps even a groan. The remarks of those neighbors who first saw the beast were not encouraging. 'If you wanted a Highland bull,' said one sarcastic friend, 'you might have got one nearer home.' It was, therefore, thought injudicious to use the animal freely, so Lancaster Comet was relegated to Clyne farm, to hide his horns there; and, when the grazing season drew on, he was turned into a field alone with some cows that had been difficult to get in calf. Being left out too late in the autumn, he caught rheumatism so severely that he had to be slaughtered, and little more was thought about him. Nevertheless, this proved to be the most important purchase the Cruickshanks ever made. The price was only 30 gs., probably the cheapest bull they ever bought; but such was the effect of the blood introduced by Lancaster Comet that the history of the herd re-



The Source of Supply for the Horse Trade.

in an endeavor to discover the exact organism causing the disease, and a way to overthrow it. While others began the work, it has been largely developed and successfully culminated by Chief Dorsett and his assistants. The process of overcoming the disease is one of immunization. At first, attempts were made to prepare antitoxins by means of artificial cultures, but the ultra-microscopic nature of the germ rendered this method unsuccessful. Knowing that hogs which have recovered from the disease are immune, the investigators proceeded along a different line, concluding that the blood of these animals must contain immunizing bodies. They soon found that these bodies had to be increased greatly before they became effective in immunizing other animals. They therefore made these animals hyper-immune by injecting infected blood into their veins, and by feeding them the vital organs of pigs which had died from the disease. The serum from these hyper-immune animals proves to be effective in protecting against the disease, and in it the desired antitoxin is found.

The real worth of this system of treatment has been abundantly proven by Dr. Connaway, of Missouri, and by Drs. McNeil and Stange, of Ames. These latter men carried on a series of many experiments in which animals were injected with 20 c.c. of this serum and 2 c.c. of infected blood. A very few of the animals injected with the serum alone died, while, when the infected blood was injected, as well as the serum, no deaths occurred, and but a very few were sick. At the same time, 75 per cent. of the animals that were not treated, and were exposed, died. This work marks a new era in the treatment