

Stock.

Early Maturity Again.

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The advantages of early maturity and early feeding are strikingly shown in the reports of the premiums awarded at the Fat Stock Show held in Chicago last month.

In exhibitions of this kind it is important that all of the conditions that have an influence upon the profits of feeding should form an essential part of the entry record of each animal, and these facts should be published in full in an official report of the show to insure a wide diffusion of the knowledge that may thus be gained.

The Illinois State Board of Agriculture are entitled to the credit of taking a step in the right direction in the management of this show, and it is to be hoped that they may increase the usefulness of future exhibitions by requiring of exhibitors a more complete history of the animals exhibited.

From the report of the awards published in the *Prairie Farmer*, the following statistics have been compiled:—

In the class of steers, "four-years-old and over," the average gain per day from birth is 1.25 pounds, the lowest being 0.75 pounds, and the highest 1.28 pounds per day.

In this aged class there is of course a greater variation in the ages of animals exhibited than in the younger classes, and this difference in age must have an influence on the results when considered with reference to the average gain per day from birth.

The animal giving the smallest gain per day (0.75 lbs.) was two years and two months older than the animal giving the highest gain per day (1.28 lbs.) These animals were also of different breeds, but the difference in age above noticed would quite overbalance any possible difference in the feeding qualities of the different breeds.

In the class of steers, "three years and under four," the average gain per day was 1.45 lbs., the lowest being 1.16 lbs., and the highest 1.80 lbs. The four animals giving the lowest gains averaged two months older than the four animals giving the highest gain.

In the class of steers, "two years and under three," the average gain per day was 1.67 lbs., the lowest being 1.36 lbs., and the highest 1.96 lbs. The one making the lowest gain being four months older than the one making the highest gain.

In the class of steers, "one year and under two," the average gain per day was 2.18 lbs., the lowest being 1.90 lbs., and the highest 2.38 lbs.

Here, too, we find that the animal giving the greatest gain is two and one-half months' younger than the one giving the smallest gain.

The greater gain per day in the younger animals to which the awards were made, is strictly in accordance with the general law of the organization, to which we have already called the attention of the readers of this journal, that the increase in live weight obtained by full feeding gradually diminishes as the animals grow older.

There is, however, another consideration which we have already noticed in preceding numbers of this paper, that should not be overlooked in this connection. Young animals not only make a more rapid increase in live weight than those that are older, but they also give a greater return for food consumed than older ones, all other conditions being equal.

It is important, then, to secure animals for feeding at mature early—that is, that are capable of being fattened while young, and acquiring that ripe and

firm condition of flesh that pleases the butcher, and brings in the market the highest possible price. The greatest rate of increase, and the largest return for food consumed, can only be obtained by feeding young animals that develop rapidly—and these are the conditions that give the best profits on food consumed, and on the labor expended in fitting the animal for market.

"Small profits and quick returns" may be a good motto in the commercial world, but the farmer who engages in feeding stock will find that the largest possible profits with quick returns may be gained by taking advantage of the desirable quality of early maturity in his feeding stock.

Raising Horses on the Farm.

In a recent address before the Catherine Valley Agricultural Society of Yates County, New York, Mr. Clark Bell made the following remarks on this subject:—

The farmer need not breed horses on a large scale, but every farmer, it seems to me, should breed them on a small scale. The farm team should be good, serviceable, well bred mares. Even in these times of financial depression, well-selected horses are as good an investment as the farmer can make, and they will do all his work, and do it well, whether at the plow, the drag, the machine, the reaper or upon the road, where in this age of steam the farmers as well as other men are obliged to be much more of the time than in past years. The principal heavy work for a team is, as we work land, mainly required in the early spring. It is that which tries the team most, and the want of the use of the team for this work that deters many from raising colts, who otherwise would. To such, and indeed to farmers and small breeders generally, who wish to use their mares in business or upon the farm, I would strongly recommend the raising of fall colts. There is much to be said in favor of it. It does not interfere with a fair and reasonable use of mares in the spring work. The colt should be dropped so as to give a month at grass, and if a little late, it will be found the best for the dam and foal.

A fall colt gets, in the nature of things and from the necessities of the case, a much better chance than a spring colt, as a general rule among small breeders. The mare has to be stabled and the colt gets a handful of grain constantly, from even the most careless of men, when it is housed in the fall or winter with its dam. It is the most universal custom to turn out the spring colt to grass with the dam, and it has to take the chances of poor pasture, a dry August, and to run its gauntlet of flies. The fall colt escapes this risk, and when I allude to the importance of raising a colt the first year, it must be seen how much better is the chance, ordinarily, of the fall colt on the same farm and with the same owner, than the spring, when the latter so rarely gets grain the first year.

With proper care and suitable handling a team of farm mares can as well do the work of a farm and raise a pair of fall colts as not. They are very little trouble and expense to the farmer. I declare it to be my firm conviction that so far as what the colt eats goes, it costs the farmer no more to raise a yearling colt than a yearling steer or a heifer, and with proper barns the care required is about the same in either case.

The number of horses in the United States at the last census was 7,145,370, and this number has undoubtedly increased since that date. We have looked for a few years past to the exportation of a considerable number of our horses to Europe, and especially to England, and the present summer, and I may say the present moment, is witnessing the buyers for the English market paying prices for the common horse that are remunerative to the breeder, not only, but more so than either beef or grain. While the extreme stringency of the times has seriously crippled the breeding and production of American trotting horses as such, all observers must recognize that there is a fair, I may say good, demand, and likely to be, for stylish, serviceable, large-sized carriage horses at as fair prices as could be expected, and higher in proportion than any other product.

I am of the opinion that the English demand is destined to increase largely, dating from this season, and that we shall not be too early for it if we commence now to raise colts for that market.

A Plate of Pork.

A writer in the *N. Y. Tribune* suggests another reason for abstinence, which he says is applicable any year—cholera or no cholera—so far as a good deal of Western pork is concerned. We make room for his statement—which perhaps persons of delicate stomach had better "skip":

"The Western mode of hog production cannot but bring bad results. Cattle feeders—feeding whole corn to their stock—would lose half their corn; but putting hogs into the yard, the latter live and grow fat on the voided, undigested corn, and are sent East to be consumed by the public generally. A more objectionable mode of producing human sustenance could not be put in practice. Whatever vermin may have infested the intestines of the stock is devoured along with the excrement of the cattle. Pork thus fattened ought, by Act of Congress, to be consigned to the dogs, and the feeder and vendor severely punished. The flesh of poultry, as well as of pigs, proclaims, by odor as well as taste, this filthy mode of fattening. Trichina is 'nowhere' beside such beastliness, because that parasite, dangerous as it is, can be killed by intense heat."

There is doubtless too much truth in what "T. P. M." charges, and it may possibly lie at the bottom of the alleged return from Europe of "a large quantity of bacon," which could find no market, and which now goes begging here at 2½ cents a pound. Nevertheless, according to recent statistics, we have sent abroad something like 12,000,000 pounds more bacon and ham this year than last, but the selling price has continued low. On this point a writer in the *London Agricultural Gazette* says:

"As a proof that if we are careful to produce articles of the best possible quality we need not fear being entirely beaten in the market by our American cousins, I may instance bacon, which, with their abundance of cheap corn, they can produce and send to our markets at a far lower price than we can fatten it; still the very best American bacon has been salable in the Liverpool market all this season at from 3d. to 4d. per pound, whole-sale, and hams at the latter figure, whilst prime English commands quite double that price."

There is no reason in the world why American farmers cannot raise quite as good products of dairy, cattle yard and swine-herd as those of England. That our hams and bacon do not compete favorably abroad with those of home growth is partly because we have not yet learned how to cure such meats to suit the English taste. Our Canadian neighbors have been more proficient in the study of that taste than we, and some, at least, of their ham and bacon has within the last two or three years sold at the very top of the English market. What Canada has done the States can do. As soon as our farmers learn just what the British appetite demands, English producers cannot continue to hedge themselves behind the "best possible quality," for that will be found as plentiful among "kin beyond sea" as elsewhere. But it will be necessary to remember meanwhile that there is no magic mechanism in the animal economy by which improper food can be transformed into meat of the best flavor.

Hints about Horse-Bits.

A writer in a German contemporary strongly counsels horse-owners who value the health of their cattle to banish from their harness-rooms all bits but straight ones of the simplest possible construction. Through a long series of years he found, from practical experience, that powerful young horses frequently fell off in condition without any appreciable cause, their food being plentiful and of the best quality, and no symptoms of general ill health being apparent. On searching carefully for the cause of this state of affairs, he found in nearly every instance that the horses' tongues had been more or less injured in consequence of the employment of curved, jointed, hinged or otherwise complicated bits. The sore and tender condition of so sensitive an organ as the tongue necessarily prevented the animals doing justice to their food; and short rations, with the usual amount of work, naturally led them to a less of condition. Unfortunately the mischief generally escapes until it is tolerably far advanced.