

# THE CANADIAN BREEDER

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### FAT STOCK SHOWS AND CHRISTMAS BEEF.

None who attended the recent Fat Stock Show at Woodstock or has inspected the display of Christmas beef at the stalls of our leading butchers, during the present holiday season, can fail to have observed that many of the animals shown at Woodstock and much of the beef exhibited in the holiday display in this city, have a greater proportion of fat than can be of practical value from a housekeeper's point of view. People will pay strong prices for "suet" sold as beef during the holiday season, but the butcher who finds himself loaded with Christmas beef after the first of January, usually finds some trouble in getting rid of it even at every day prices.

In view of these facts, people who habitually jump at conclusions are apt to condemn fat stock shows and Christmas beef, as two institutions that have outlived their usefulness, if they ever had any, and demand that they be either radically reformed or abolished altogether. No sane man would contend that either Christmas beef or the animals that produce it would be likely to yield favorable returns either to the feeder or the butcher, but there are other considerations than the mere immediate results. The breeders and feeders who win prizes at fat stock shows attain to a pre-eminence in their

lines that is real capital and tangible value to them, while the butcher who makes a grand display at Christmas and Easter is very much in the same position.

But, so far as fat stock shows are concerned, there are other and more important matters to be considered. These phenomenally fat animals, though they may not be worth anything like the feed and care bestowed upon them, furnish the key to many important secrets well worth knowing. They tell the breeder what breed matures most rapidly, what breed produces the most profit, when crossed with common stock. Are not such problems as these well worth the solving? Only a few years ago the Canadian cattleman who would dare to compare any other race of beef makers with the Shorthorns, either for feeding or grading, would have been set down by a large majority as an enthusiast, if not a lunatic. Now, however, the Herefords and Scotch Polls are both holding up their ends bravely against the hitherto invincible Shorthorn. It is not that the Shorthorns are thought the less of, but that the other breeds have grown in public favor. At the recent fat stock show in Chicago, Mr. J. J. Hill's grade Angus steer carried off the prize for the best three-year-old carcass and also the prize for showing the most edible beef, while the Hereford grade steer Joe, bred by Seabury & Sample, won the sweepstakes, the highest honor in the carcass exhibit. While on foot, however, neither of these animals was successful and had it not been for the crucial test of being brought to the block their superiority would never have been established.

In discussing the progress of early development as fostered by the English fat stock shows, the (Dublin) *Farmers' Gazette* says:—

"But for fat stock shows should we ever have heard of a two-year-old steer weighing upwards of 18½ cwt., or a lamb of the current year turning the scale at 230 lb? All praise is due to the Smithfield Club for this encouragement to the extreme of high feeding. The prizes, cups, champion prizes, and gold and silver medals, distributed this week at Islington, amount in total value to £3,465. It is possible for one beast to win £210 and a gold medal, and for a pen of three sheep to win £85 and a gold medal.

"As regards the progress of early development during the past half century, it has been remarked that between 1830 (when the show was re-opened after several years discontinuance) and 1844, the ages of the champion cattle, with three exceptions, were over four years, and on four occasions they were over five. During the next twenty-six years gold medals or cups were given for the best steer or ox and the best heifer or cow, and twenty out of the fifty-two winners were under four years of age, while seven were under three. Since 1868 a champion plate has been given for the best beast in the yard, as well as a cup for the best steer or ox, and another for the best heifer or cow. From that time to the present the champion prize has gone to animals under four years of age thirteen times out of sixteen, and twice to animals under three years."

### FARMYARD MANURE—ROTTED AND UNROTTED.

Among intelligent farmers who exercise considerable care in storing their manure, there are some singular prejudices prevailing regarding the value and use of manure. Many a farmer would think he was wasting both time and material were he to spread and plough in manure that was not properly "rotted." That such an opinion should be prevalent is not surprising. Take pound for pound and rotted manure will produce far more satisfactory and speedy results than unrotted. But this is not the only matter to be considered. A pound of green manure will not make a pound of manure that is well rotted. Rotted manure is simply green manure considerably concentrated and in a high state of preparation. If this were all it would not matter much whether the manure was used in a rotted or unrotted condition; but this is not all. While the manure has been rotting, much of its value has been dissipated in the fermentive process, while that which remains is in such condition as to yield nearly all of its plant food to the first crop that follows its application. On the other hand, unrotted or unfermented manure when once ploughed under not only yields all the ingredients that make up the more highly prepared and concentrated article, but much more beside. All the volatile portion which is driven off in the process of fermentation is now given to the land. The process of rotting progresses slowly but with thoroughness, and not a particle of available plant-food is allowed to escape.

Of course there are crops in which a limited use of rotted manure is found in practice to be necessary for the successful cultivation of certain crops. Thus, says a well-known writer, the turnip, the carrot, and the beet, which are sown in the early part of summer, require that the manure applied shall be in such a state of decomposition as to act upon and nourish them in the first stages of their growth, and if this be not so the crop may entirely fail. In these and similar cases accordingly a complete preparation of the farmyard dung is an essential point of practice. Certain plants, again, do not require the same state of decomposition of the dung. Thus the potato requires less in the first stages of its growth than the turnip, and hence it is not necessary to subject the manure to be applied to the same degree of fermentation.

But since guano, bone dust, and other portable manures became available for turnip and other crops that require immediate manurial action, it has been a well-established rule that farmyard manure had better be used before it has lost any of its fertilizing constituents, and that when kept for any length of time (as in practice it must be) it should be preserved as much as possible in the same condition as when it was taken from the stables, cow stalls and piggeries.

The common practice of carrying dung and litter daily from the various farm buildings to an open pit occasions the loss of a considerable portion of its most valuable elements, and produces other chemical changes than those which contribute to fertilization.