

Breeder and Grazier.

Singular Death of Short-Horns.

I have been requested to write a short report of the sudden and mysterious death of twenty-five head of cattle, mostly thoroughbreds, from the herd of Mr. A. K. Riggins, of Menard Co., Ill.

There were in the herd about 130 head, cows with calf, and yearling steers and heifers. The inclosure in which they were kept contains about 400 acres, all of which is blue grass pasture, except 40 acres of stalks from which the corn had been gathered some ten days prior to the death of the cattle.

On Thursday evening the cattle were seen and appeared in as good condition as any herd in the State. They were not noticed again, particularly, until Saturday morning, a period of about thirty-six hours, when one fine yearling steer was noticed pawing and horning the earth, foaming at the mouth, and instantly fell; after a day of brief convulsions it died. It was then discovered that twenty-four more were dead in the field; all except four or five were in the 40 acres of stalks; the rest were only a few rods from the fence which separated the pasture from the stalks. The rest of the herd—over one hundred—appear in as good condition now as ever. No symptoms of disease of any kind among them.

On Sabbath, at the request of Mr. Riggins, I made a few *post mortem* examinations. The viscera all appeared normal, no signs of inflammation or congestion in any of them except the small glands situated in the membranes of the small intestines. These glands are known in the human anatomy as *Peyer's patches* or glands. These were found in an ulcerated condition, containing pus. They presented, in the inflated intestines, very much the appearance of small black seed, adhering to the mucous membrane. The contents of the stomach and intestines were what we would expect in cattle kept as these were. I am inclined to think that the contents of the many-fold, or fourth stomach, were drier than when in the normal condition, but am not familiar enough with the healthy condition to be authority on this point.

I am of the opinion, taking everything into consideration, that the cattle were poisoned with *Strychnia*. I form this opinion, however, without knowing whether there is, or has ever been, any disease prevailing among cattle which destroys so rapidly, appears so insidiously and disappears so suddenly.

The stockmen in this community are alarmed, and want all the information they can get in regard to the matter, and any information the readers of *The Prairie Farmer* may be able to give will be appreciated.

Petersburg, Ill.

H. A. HARRIS, M. D.

Short-horn Breeders of Indiana.

The Short-horn cattle breeders of Indiana met at Indianapolis, Nov. 11, about thirty being present. Dr. A. C. Stevenson, of Greencastle, President of the Society, was in the chair. The annual address of the President was devoted to the cattle business and interests of the state. He said the sales of Short-horn cattle in the past two years had far exceeded the expectations of the most sanguine, and the supply is still below the demand. The prospects for the future are as bright as any one could wish. The Doctor recommends separate organizations of Short-horn breeders for self improvement and protection. The annual fee of membership was fixed at \$2 instead of \$1. The subject of holding annual stock sales at Indianapolis was widely discussed, but nothing definite was done. The Association discussed the subject of establishing a new grade of books under the supervision of a committee appointed by the breeders, and the project was quite favorably received. Dr. Stevenson then read an able paper on the science of breeding, a subject which may be termed his hobby, and to which he has given much thought. The election of officers for 1875 resulted as follows: President, Dr. A. C. Stevenson; Vice-President, Chas. Lawder; Secretary, Claude Matthews; Treasurer, S. F. Lackridge; Executive Committee, Dr. Beis, W. W. Thrasher, and H. Cravens.

The Short-horn cattle breeders' convention met again on the following day. W. W. Thrasher read a paper upon the handling qualities of Short-horns, taking the ground that whites and roans are the best handlers, the reds being the poorest. A good handler is one which is mellow, soft, and elastic to the touch, and makes fine beef. Animals with long, coarse hair

are the best handlers. The convention agreed with him in his definitions, but it was also asserted that the yellow reds are good handlers. The following subjects for discussion at the next meeting were adopted: "The value of Short-horn bulls, and what are the characteristics of a breeding bull," paper by Charles Lawder. "The color of Short-horns, physiologically and philosophically considered," Dr. W. C. Bice. "Indiana as a grazing state," S. F. Lackridge. "What constitutes a good and perfect Short-horn cow," W. W. Thrasher. "Preparation of Short-horns for exhibition, and manner of showing in rings," J. G. Williamson. "The proper age of breeding, both male and female," H. C. Meredith.

Structure of a Cow's Horn.

It is very frequently the case that in the commonest, most uninviting of objects, we may see (if we like) beautiful examples of engineering skill. A few days since, says Mr. Frank Buckland in *Land and Water*, I was inspecting the large tanneries of the Messrs. Hamlyn at Buckfastleigh, on the River Dart, Devonshire. In one of the back yards was a mountain of the skulls and horns of cows of all sorts and kinds. Here there was a treasure worthy of investigation; so I got on to the mountain of horns and skulls, and picked out some beautiful specimens which Mr. Hamlyn kindly gave me, in order to make sections, etc. I find that over the brain of the cow a strong roof of bone is thrown in the shape of an arch, so as to form a substantial foundation for the horns. This roof is not solid, but is again strengthened below by a series of bony arches, that are so distributed as to form a series of hollow chambers, thus forming a structure uniting strength with lightness.

The problem now is, how to fasten the horn on each side on to this buttress. The horn itself must of course be formed of horn proper, i.e., hardened hair. In the rhinoceros, we find a horn composed entirely of a solid mass of what is really a bunch of hair agglutinated together; but this kind of horn would have been much too heavy for the cow's convenient use. What is to be done? Why, hollow out the centre of the horn of course; but stay—this will not do, because how is the horn to be supplied with blood-vessels?—in fact, how is it to grow? Let us see how it is done by the great Designer.

Cut the horn right across with a saw, and you will find inside another horn, only made of bone. If the section is made about one-third of the way down the length of the horn, you will be able to pick out a piece of bone in the shape of a cone, on which, or rather round which, the horn proper has shaped itself. This bone fits the cavity with the greatest accuracy; it is as light as the thinnest paper, and yet as strong as a cone of tin. It is everywhere perforated with holes, which in life contained the nerves, the veins and arteries, and we know a cow has all these in her horns; nerves proved by the fact that cows do not like their horns touched, and that they can scratch a fly off their hides with the tip of the horn; arteries and veins, proved by the fact that a horn when broken will bleed, and that the horn of a living cow feels quite warm when held in the hand, besides which the nerves and arteries form a union between the internal core of bone and the external covering of horn proper.

If we now cut the rest of the horn into sections we shall find that the inside of the bony part is really hollow, but that very strong buttresses of bone are thrown, about every inch or so, across the cavity of the horn in such a manner as to give it the greatest possible support and strength. I have cut a cow's horn and skull into several sections to show these buttresses of bone, and now that the preparation is finished I have another specimen to show that there is design and beauty in all created objects.

The Coupling Season.

In handling a flock of over 1,000 breeding ewes, for a series of years, the following course has been pursued, and is here given for the purpose of having it criticised by those who may have something better to propose.

For several weeks before the season for coupling, corn, in proportion of one bushel to each 100 ewes, was fed each day, after they had eaten all the grass they wanted. November 1st the flock was taken to the barn, and about fifty driven into a pen. Among these were turned two or three common rams, securely aproned, and as the ewes in season were found, they were immediately caught and transferred to an adjoining pen. When the flock had thus been handled through, or sufficiently to secure as many ewes as it

was desired to breed for one day—which should not be more than five or six for each ram—they were turned to pasture.

The ewes in season thus being together, reference could be had to the propriety of crossing certain rams. A single ewe was then caught and placed in a small pen, and the ram turned in with her. As soon as served, the ewe was marked and turned out in a pasture in which were allowed none but ewes that had been bred. Where six or eight rams were used, by the time that each had served a ewe the first one was again ready for service—thus enabling the shepherd to turn out thirty to fifty ewes before noon. The same course was pursued every morning, until all, or nearly all the ewes had been bred.

Experience has demonstrated that a larger number of lambs can be obtained from a flock thus handled than from any other system—while the advantage afforded for selecting the most judicious crosses, would recommend it even if a smaller number of lambs was the result. An additional advantage was found in the fact that by this system a choice ram could be made to serve four or five times as many ewes as he could if "turned in" with them, and this with less physical exhaustion.

Where really choice animals are used—and only such should be—any other policy is worse than extravagant, as not only the money paid for such animals is misspent, but the gain that might otherwise result from it placed beyond the reach of the flock master.—*Natural Live Stock Journal*.

Feeding Cows Turnips.

The question is asked, "Does it pay to feed turnips to cows?" Yes. Feed them to dry cows, but not to them while in milk. In winter the cow gets only dry feed—hay, corn, fodder and straw. It may be some feed meal and bran in small quantity. This is a great change from grass, therefore I think the cow should have something to keep the bowels loose, and turnips will not only do that, but will keep the animal in good health. I do not know that there is so much food in the turnip, so as to save hay or other fodder, but there is something in them that seems to keep the cow in fine condition, and if any one will feed his cows a few messes and look on and see them eat, certainly I think he will say, "Yes, turnips are good food for cows." I am only speaking of dry cows in winter.

Any farmer who grows three to five acres of corn may have three to five hundred bushels of flat or field turnips to feed if he will take the trouble to save the seed. If any one wishes to try it next season and will follow the directions here given, I will guarantee them a full crop every time.

Get good seed. Sow half a pound per acre in among the corn any time in July when working the corn the last time; be sure and put the seed down broadcast before you plough or cultivate the corn, so as to work the seed into the ground; no matter if you are marking with the plough you will not get them in too deep. The seed will come up sure. For the good of your corn and turnips, keep the weeds down.—*Cor. Rural New Yorker*.

The Fallacy of Pasturing.

A Plea for Soiling.

A great many farmers who do not believe in soiling "because it is too much trouble" will be astonished when they recall the record of the year and see what they have been doing. Nearly every farmer has practiced soiling to a greater or less extent. Many, without intending it or being prepared for it, have had to feed their cattle one, two, three or more months during the growing season. Hundreds of farmers allotted the usual amount of ground for pasture, generally one or two acres per head of horned stock, but scarcity of feed compelled them to begin pasturing early; the dry, cold weather of May put the grass back; the cattle kept everything eaten close, and lucky were they who had a piece of early clover intended for meadow, from which they could cut an armful of grass daily for each cow, to eke out the pasture. This looks very much like soiling; but never mind, we won't call it that, and then nobody will be frightened.

After haying and harvesting there was a temporary improvement. For two weeks cattle filled themselves tolerably well on the upspringing rowen or tender clover. It was costly feed. The farmer might more economically have invited his cows and sheep into the kitchen and given them "table board." Meadows eaten bare and left unprotected for winter—the precious clover, the seed of which costs six dollars a bushel, gnawed to the roots; those