Correspondence

Weight and Market Value of Eggs.

To the Editor of The Canada Farmer.

In view of the very great production and consumption of eggs, I in common with many other owners of poultry, am anxious to see a standard of weight and measure applied to this justly and universally esteemed edible The practice which prevails in other markets than our own at Hamilton may be different, but here they are sold universally by the dozen, regardless of the difference in weight.

Now, the weight of meat, bread and butter, is one of the standards of consideration for our money. Why not in eggs?

The present practice is a clear injustice to at least two classes of the community; one is composed of those persons who, by science and skill, are endeavouring to develop the best properties in our domestic poultry There is no inducement for such to carry large eggs to market, for his neighbour with a dozen eggs weighing ¼ lb. less walks home with the same amount of money in his pocket a reward for bad breeding. The other class, need I say, are the consumers. It is very evident that the same principle that compels the baker to give a certain weight to his loaf, ought to apply to the sale of eggs To assist those who take an interest in this matter I subjoin a table of weights, showing the difference in size in hens' eggs. I think it will be pretty clear that the wide-awake purchaser by weight can afterwards sell per dozen with enormous profits.

TABLE

Average Weight per Dozen.	AVOIRDUPOIS. Lb.	Oz
Common Fowl	1	6
Spanish	1	9½
Gray Dorking	1	10
" and Brahma	1	14
" and Cochin	1	15½

In giving the above, I do not wish to imply that the careful breeder of any of the varieties named cannot produce an average weight of egg greater than laid down in the table; I know it can be done. My object is to show the wide difference, both in weight and value of varieties as produced, in my own peculiar way. It may differ slightly from some of my friends' calculations; but the proportion in production of weight from the varieties will still remain.

If the proportion is correct, (and we hope for the benefit of all parties others may give their tables) then it follows that the person purchasing the eggs of the cross between the Gray Dorking and Cochin will receive nine and a half oz. in the dozen more than obtained in the common hen's eggs. The difference in the money value will always depend on the market value, regulated by supply and demand.

The remedy is easily supplied, could each municipality enact a law preventing persons selling except by weight, fixing it at a reasonably high standard. The result would be justice to all parties. A more significant result would be the emulation aroused amongst keepers of poultry as regards the size of eggs always to be produced by an intelligent breeder through proper selection

W H. MILLS.

Hamilton, March 18, 1867.

Note by Ed C F – We think our correspondent has underrated the weight of the eggs of Spanish fowl. These, according to Doyle, weigh on an average 2¾ oz a-piece, making the weight of the dozen 2 lbs 1 oz.

Drainage, and the Statute Relating Thereto.

To the Editor of The Canada Farmer:

Sir,—As you are faithfully advocating the farming interests of our country, permit me to endorse the statements of many an earnest and able article in your paper on the subject of draining; and although I expect the same fate for my communication as too often has befallen others, viz., to be carelessly read over, then to be thrown into the waste basket and thereafter for ever forgotten, still, as great results have not been brought about in a day, I would urge our friends to hope on, and keep the subject before the public. You need not travel far through our fair country till you see the want of a thorough system of draining. Our best lands are yet lying waste and worthless; while our high dry lands are quite exhausted with over cropping. The vegetable soil has been washed from the higher lands with the rains of past ages, and now that the fever has given way to the strong arms of our fathers, it is our part to begin a very important part in the improvement of our country. This is, however, from the nature of thing, no easy task to accomplish, and cannot be effected by the isolated efforts on one willing individual's farm. A thorough outlet must be secured before anything can be done. This in most cases can only be obtained by the combination of a number of farmers, and then there is always some unwilling individual in the way, who makes no advance himself and puts obstacles in the way of others' improvement. Take the whole of Canada West, from Hawksbury to Sarnia, and this is the prevailing trouble. Everywhere we meet with lazy fellows that will not open out the water-courses on their land; and it is useless for the industrious man to operate till the mouth of a water sewer is opened. Thus it goes on from one season to another—quiet, peaceable men not wishing to push the thing by law, and the law being by no means imperative or efficient on the subject. Why should a man be allowed to buy a piece of woodland to reserve for fuel, in a district where woodland is of more value than land under cultivation, while his industrious neighbour along-side is drowning with water for the reason that "I have no right to open a course through unimproved land?"

I repeat, the law is cumbersome, and too intricate to accomplish such important results. Is not a superabundance of water, spreading epidemic disease to all around, as great an evil to vegetation as Canada thistles? Why not as imperative a law for opening water-courses as for destroying thistles? We are justly compelled by the penalty of a fine to cut thistles, and Mr. Stirton deserves the thanks of the farmers for the most efficient law yet passed to eradicate the dreaded pest. Much is to be learnt in this respect from the practice in Lower Canada. As you pass along you see the leading water course opened, the ditches running up each line kept open jointly, and carrying off all surface water. Indeed this is a subject that requires the earnest attention of the Legislature, and it is to be hoped that some law will yet be devised that will effect what the unassisted efforts of individual farmers cannot accomplish.

FARMER.

South Dumfries, April 5th, 1867.

Rough Comfrey as a Fodder Plant.

To the Editor of The Canada Farmer:

Sir,—Some days ago, in looking through *London's Encyclophædia of Agriculture*, I noticed a paragraph giving an account of the rough comfrey, (*Symphytum asperrimum*), which from the description seems to be a valuable plant for green fodder, as it will give about thirty tons to the acre. Being a native of Siberia, it ought to do well in this climate. It is mentioned in very high terms in Baxter's "Agriculture." Should you think it worth noticing, I will be greatly obliged by your giving me some information on the sbbject through the medium of your paper. stating whether the plant is grown in Canada, or if any attempt has been made to naturalize it. In England the attempt has met with success.

QUÆSTOR

Niagara, March 25th, 1867.

The prickly comfrey, to which our correspondent refers, is a native of the Caucasus, and was introduced into Britain early in the present century as a garden flower. It belongs to a natural family of plants noted for its mucilaginous produce and emmollient properties, namely, *Boragineæ*. There are two native species in Britain, *Symphytum officinale*, common comfrey, and *Symphytum tuberosum*, tuberous-rooted comfrey. The common comfrey produces a great quantity of tender, esculent shoots, devoid of any noxious qualities, and freely eaten by cattle. It has been cultivated to some extent; but the prickly comfrey, *Symphytum asperrimum*, has deservedly acquired more attention, as a forage plant, it being exceedingly hardy, much relished by cattle when they become accustomed to its use, and highly productive. Notwithstanding, it would appear that the high expectations raised some years ago in England regarding these plants have not been realized by subsequent trials, and their cultivation at present receives but little attention. We are not aware whether anything has been done in this matter in Canada, but from the hardy character and great productiveness of the comfrey, and the healthy appearance it assumes in many of our gardens, it would be very desirable to give it a fair trial.

The comfreys require good strong land, deeply cultivated; though by manure they will succeed on lighter and inferior soils. They are best propagated by offsets in early spring, three planted triangularly together in hills, about eight inches apart, and the rows from two to three feet asunder, according to the strength of the land; thus admitting of horse as well as hand hoeing. It is of great importance to keep the ground clear of weeds, an object readily accomplished when the plants are in rows at regular distances. As an experiment we would suggest a trial of sowing or planting thickly, on the broadcast system.

The comfrey in this climate would not probably yield more than two crops during the season, but in countries where the period of growth is longer, three cuttings are frequently obtained It should always be cut before it gets fairly into flower, or it will become hard and unpalatable to stock. The leaves stripped off are much relished by sheep and cattle, and the stalks, when cut and mixed with chaff, are said to be very suitable for horses. From twenty to thirty tons of green forage may be the expected yield per acre, when the soil is good and the management judicious. We shall be happy to record any well-ascertained results that may be obtained in giving the plant a trial in this country.

Sheep Showing Regulations.

To the Editor of The Canada Farmer:

Sir,—You would oblige me by letting me know, through the next number of the Canada Farmer, whether sheep shorn after the 1st of April, if shorn again after the 25th, will be allowed to compete at the Exhibition at Kingston, [Yes. Ed. C. F.] the notice of change of time having come through the Canada Farmer, which arrived at the post office on the 4th of April, after some intending exhibitors had their sheep shorn. There was great comment at the late Toronto Exhibition, on the dishonest practice, as it was termed, of breeders not shearing sheep closely. Inspectors were appointed, whose decision was to be final, and after examining one class of sheep about an hour, they found themselves unequal to the task. Nor was this to be wondered at. Is it possible for any man to tell on the 25th of September whether a sheep has been sheared close on the 1st of April or not? Let me ask, also, what great advantage is derived from such exact shearing? It leaves the exhibitor in an awkward position; for, after going to the Provincial show, he may want to find a market for his stock on the other side of the lines. He tells you it is no use going there without plenty of wool. He has not only the United States breeders to compete with, but likewise sheep bought up by speculators from his own country, some of which are shorn as early as February. No doubt close shearing is needed for the inspection of some judges, but all the wool a sheep can be got to carry will not deceive a competent judge. There is another matter that requires notice: some of the best sheep in the