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Our School Department.

Breeds of Farm Animals. BY GEO. W. HOFFERD, M.A., NORMAL SCHOOL, LONDON.

To have pupils of our elementary and secondary schools become better ac-quainted with farm animals is not an easy task, because the teacher will feel that there is no real substitute for the barnyard as a practical laboratory. But he will recognize the fact that, though he has not the barnyard at his immediate disposal, he is dealing with a topic that has come within the pupil's experience. He has a real opportunity of bringing the school into touch with the home-life of the community

The usual problems of what to teach, how to teach, and how to obtain the necessary information, may present some difficulties. The primary aim will not be merely to give information and a little mental discipline. Though this may be good, the powers of observation imagination, reasoning and memory must be exercised in presenting this work, for it is through these that we arouse the interests of our bright boys and girls. The aim will be to encourage pupils to live close to Nature, that they may learn of Her; to open up a field for intellectual life, the existence of which they never suspected; to stimulate and improve their æsthetic and social natures.

This is not a topic that can be dealt with in one or two lessons in a schoolroom, if one expects to accomplish any-thing worth while. It would be well to have a few lessons extending over at least a month; and if a proper start be made, there need be no uneasy feeling that "nothing of itself will come." What is really wanted is a better direction and management of "the incidence of teach-The pupils must be so introduced ing. to the work that they may play a vigorous part, and be made increasingly responsible for their own education through interest. This is not forgetting that the majority of our boys and girls do not desire to make the effort to get an education. Can they be put in such a position that they may be interested; and that it may be unpleasant to be idle, and attractive to be diligent and well informed regarding this important farm topic? The necessary information is briefly

outlined and discussed in the Manual of Agriculture and Horticulture for Ontario schools, pp. 42-79. Through the study of these pages, and by careful observations made of types and breeds in various stables and barnyards of the community and elsewhere, the wide-awake teacher can prepare himself fairly well, though his past experience in this line of observation may have been meagre. There are excellent additional helps in various numbers of "The Farmer's Advocate;" "Bulletins" published by the Ontario Department of Agriculture, which may be had for the asking; "The Essentials of griculture ' by W atere Ginn & Company, Boston, price \$1.48; Fundamentals of Agriculture." by published by the American Book Company, New York, price \$1.00. Needless to say, no young teacher should depend entirely on books. They are mere aids. The real knowledge and interest must come from studying the animals themselves.

Perhaps most pupils have their greatest interest in horses. Then let the horse be the starting point. Divide horses into two main classes or types, viz, draft horses and light horses, as indicated in the Manual; or for high school purposes in districts where horse breeding is imand saddle horse. The average farmer is most interested in the draft horse, and it would be well to put the emphasis on the breeds which are classed under this type. Form III pupils of our elementary schools are not able to do much, either in extent or detail, with this topic. High-school pupils can do a great deal.

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The care of horses is an important part to stress with young people. The benefit to horses of keeping them clean, fed upon clean fodder, and kept in stables well lighted and ventilated is too frequently overlooked. Harness should not be allowed to chafe the skin and produce sores, some of which are hard to heal. Tight checking is cruel, and a very cold bit put into a horse's mouth often causes serious difficulty by tearing the skin of Everybody should know the mouth. such facts as these.

Similarly, a little systematic work should be undertaken, as outlined in the Manual on cattle, pigs, sheep and poultry.

The difficulty arises in how to teach this work effectively in a class-room. Here the teacher must endeavor to stimulate the pupils to make observations of farm animals outside of school hours. A visit, by teacher and class, once or twice a year to a farm, where well-bred and well-cared-for animals are kept, is time well spent. A very satisfactory way to start the study is by presenting a series of good pictures of good breeds of farm animals. The writer has made quite a collection of these, which he clipped from agricultural papers and mounted on cardboard for class use. At the beginning of a lesson, say on horses, these can be handed out to the pupils, one type at a time, and the common breeds of the type. Then, by conversation and discussion with the class, the experiences and observations of the pupils can be brought out. Some know considerable, and others often are surprised that they know so little about the animals in their immediate surroundings. The interested tone of the teacher and a few interested members of the class will do much to stimulate the others to cease living in ignorance of things which they might know for a look. Follow up this little introduction by asking pupils to bring a list of the breeds of all their farm animals at home. In some cases the total of a class will make quite a respectable list. A second and a third lesson can be spent in an interesting way by classifying the breeds of the list into types, and by having pupils describe and discuss the breeds on their list, which they have observed and discussed with e older members of the family at home Plenty of time for home observation should be given after the stimulus has commenced to incite self-education by observation and reflection. The native home of the various breeds, and their merits and demerits from an economic standpoint would naturally follow an acquaintance of the breeds. This will have a desirable socializing influence on the young pupils' outlook, and a definite correlation with geography, history and arithmetic.

Fundamentals of Agriculture," by Halligan, published by D. C. Heath & Company, Boston, price \$1.50; "High School Agriculture," by Mayne & Hatch,

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