Practical Queries in Sheep Farming.

EDITOR FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

SIR,—Allow me space to reply through your columns to the enclosed letter:—

DEAR SIR,—Knowing you to be one of the best-posted men on sheep husbandry, I venture to ask a few questions, and should you favor me with a reply, you will greatly oblige, as I am devoting 100 acres of land to this work. I see that you grew some early rape last year. What is the earliest date that it would be advisable to sow it? Would the turnip louse not destroy the leaves of that sown early? I sowed 12½ acres last year, on June 25th, and all that came up soon after sowing was literally covered with lice, while that which came up six or eight weeks later escaped. Would not the stalks of those large plants of yours be too large and woody for lamb feed? Which is the more valuable, the leaves or the stalks for lamb feed? I sowed 1¼ pounds to the acre in drills 28 inches apart, and found that much too thick. About ¾ pound I should think would be better. My lambs were confined on it, and without grain averaged $4.40 each some two or three weeks before Christmas. I have 25 acres that I want to devote to rape this year, and I have just been wondering if it would be wise to sow it about May 1st. All the seedmen seem to think that the hot weather affects the early sown adversely. Have you ever known sheep to be pastured on white mustard, and if so what do you think of it? Is fall rye good for sheep pasture during spring months? Which do you prefer for sheep in winter, turnips or mangolds? What is the best time of the year to dip sheep? Some advise dipping the lambs two or three days after shearing. Will this do, or should *both* be dipped at shearing time and again in the fall? Would it pay to dip the lambs that I buy to fatten on rape? Did you see an article in the FARMER'S ADVOCATE telling how Prof. Shaw succeeded in feeding sixteen sheep off one acre of land by growing a series of green crops, and if so, do you think it practicable on a larger scale?

Huron Co., Ont. JOHN H. MALLOUGH.

REPLY.—In the first place, I want to express keen sympathy with our correspondent in his venture. I have urged such enterprises again and again, and I feel sure there are thousands of acres now totally unprofitable that can be made to bear their share of governmental tribute and Provincial taxation, as well as yielding a handsome revenue to the enterprising shepherd. To be carried out successfully, brain work, enterprise, patience, and observation will be necessary. As a chain is only as strong as its weakest link, so this system will be successful or not according as the connecting links are maintained in steady progression by close observation and natural aptitude for the business.

I don't wish it to be understood that I have been advocating any profound scheme, but simply point out what has been accomplished in England, and ask whether a modified system, as there adopted, might be successfully carried on here. With the knowledge firmly impressed upon my mind that without sheep husbandry many of their now most prosperous and the best farmed districts must go out of cultivation—that our climate is suitable, that even our thin, rocky soils resembling those alluded to, are naturally quite the equal in fertility to the Norfolk sands—I do hope to see this industry so established in our midst that our mutton may attain the same popularity and good name in Europe that it bears in the neighboring Republic; and that the same skill and intelligence may be brought to bear as has been done in other branches of agriculture.

Replying to the questions as in order asked:—First: As to date of sowing rape.—My experience with early rape has not been satisfactory, except last year, when it came so opportunely. I shall try about four acres this year, early enough so that if it looks *like a failure I can plow and re-sow*. I would advise our correspondent to do the same.

Large rape.—The stalks are the most valuable part of the plant, and these thick ones were scooped out below the surface of the soil. I like sowing plenty of seed; it can be harrowed out; but I am satisfied we all leave our plants too thick. I hope to get some seed in by 1st May, and earlier if possible. If I were feeding for market I don't think I should care to have it so early, but where one is doing a ram trade it answers a great purpose.

White mustard was grown largely in Lincolnshire when I was a boy, as sheep feed, and especially as a preparation for wheat; it followed oats and vetches, or some other green crop; about 10 to 12 pounds of seed per acre was used. It was thought to have the peculiar property of causing ewes to come in season, hence it was often used by ram breeders or those wanting early lambs. The ewes were turned upon it about ten days or two weeks before the ram was put with them.

I place but little value upon rye; it will blow out a lamb; it will put the ewes off their appetite for dry food, and just about when it gets to be sound feed it at once becomes woody. A few extra bushels of mangolds at that season are worth so much more there is no comparison. As between turnips (swedes) and mangolds I prefer the former, except for ewes after lambing.

The best time to dip is *whenever you find ticks*. But if both lambs and ewes are dipped a week after shearing, there will be but little need to dip in fall; still, I would do so if necessary. I dipped my show lambs in December on coming from Guelph, and then concluded to put the whole flock through. We did so with no bad results; so I would advise dipping at any season rather than feed ticks. I would certainly dip every lamb I bought to put on rape.

I don't remember Prof. Shaw's article to which you refer, but I do believe that it is not only possible, but in the near future a system of sheep husbandry will be established that may be carried out on the same (though modified) lines as in England, and with equal success. And I am sanguine enough to hope that Mr. Mallough may be one of the pioneers. He is on the right scent; work it out foot by foot as a hound on the trail. If one year you overrun the scent, "hark back" and work the ground over again. You will meet with "checks," but regard them as breathing spells, wherein one may cogitate upon the mistakes and thoroughly learn to avoid them in the future; they are often of more value to the student than even success.

Allow me to continue the simile a little further, and hope our friend may at last run from scent to view, and pull him down in the open, with the glorious "whoo whoop" ringing in his ears. In other words, may he be as successful as I hope and wish he may, and not be dismayed at first with small discouragements, but persevere, and the result is certain. RICHARD GIBSON.

Sow Killing Pigs.

SIR,—In your issue of March 2nd, "Breeder" asked a remedy for sow killing pigs. I may say that I have learned from experience a lesson that may be of use to other breeders. When my imported sow farrowed a short time ago, I, being very anxious about her litter, watched her carefully. When the little fellows were a day old the sow would lie down, but as soon as the pigs commenced to suckle she would jump up as if in pain. This she would repeat as often as they commenced to suck. After a few attempts to satisfy their hunger, the sow jumped up in a rage and grabbed one in her mouth, and would have killed it had I not been there to save its life. I at once surmised the cause, and on examining their mouths, found a number of very sharp, black teeth. These I removed with the pinchers, which put an end to the trouble, as she from that time allowed her family to satisfy themselves with apparent pleasure to herself.

Jarvis, Ont. GIDEON SNYDER, JR.

FARM.

Farmers' Institutes--Division No. 6.

Our Stock Foods.—G. E. Day, Agriculturist of the Ontario Agricultural College, Guelph, dealt with the composition of foods, the utility of the different food constituents, and methods of combining fodder to produce a balanced ration. The amount of digestible nutrients in the different fodders was illustrated by means of a colored chart. The value of a fodder depends upon its composition and its digestibility, as the animal is able to make use of only the digested portion. Some knowledge of the composition of foods cannot fail to be of benefit to the intelligent feeder, as it enables him to combine the foods at his disposal to the best advantage. It is impossible to say which is the best possible ration for any given purpose, for a short study of the composition of foods shows that the fodders might be combined in a great many ways and give practically the same result. The feeder must be guided by what he has at his disposal, and it will be to his advantage to use to the greatest possible extent the article of food of which he has the largest quantity. But, at the same time, he can frequently improve the ration by adding to it some fodder that is rich in those substances in which his principal fodder may be poor. Thus barley, wheat, oats, and corn may be profitably mixed with bran, peas, oil cake or cotton-seed meal, depending upon those it may be most convenient for him to procure. This subject always brought out a lively and profitable discussion.

In the neighborhood of Meaford and Thornbury there was a great scarcity of coarse fodder; straw is $9 per ton and hay $16 per ton, while grain is comparatively cheap. In a case of this kind it would be advisable to use a heavier grain ration, and use as little hay and straw as is consistent with the health of the animals. The farmers who possess silos are certainly the fortunate ones this year.

The manurial value of fodders is also an important consideration, and something which is too apt to be overlooked by many farmers. In purchasing concentrated food stuffs we are also purchasing valuable fertilizers, and if the manure is properly cared for this will prove the most satisfactory and economical method of buying fertilizers.

The Dairy Industry.—L. Patton, Oxford Mills (N. Grenville), is an expert in the cheese business, and his talks on the management of dairy cattle and on the advantages of dairying were much appreciated. In the section of country from which he comes nearly every farmer sends his milk to the cheese factory, and the effect is to very much lessen the cost of drawing. In the Grenville cheese factories private enterprise has, on the whole, been more successful than the co-operative system. One cause of failure in the latter plan has been the lack of confidence in the business managers, which has resulted in a change of manager almost every year; and as it takes several years for a man to become acquainted with the details of managing the business, the injurious effects of these frequent changes many be easily seen.

In one of Mr. Patton's factories the proceeds are divided as advocated by Prof. Dean, viz., by adding two to the fat reading and dividing the proceeds in the resulting proportion; but in his other factories the per cent. of fat alone is made the basis of division. He believes that either method is immensely superior to the old system of pooling the milk.

In some districts the people seem discouraged at the low prices for cheese which prevailed during the past summer. The reason offered for the low prices was as follows: In the fall of 1894 cheese was purchased by the buyers at a much higher price than the market would warrant. In the hope of avoiding loss the buyers held over the cheese until the spring of 1895, when it was sold at a sacrifice and came into competition with the spring cheese. Of course spring cheese could not compete with cheese of this quality, and as a result it had to be sold at a very low price. More than that, the buyers who had lost so heavily in 1894 were not particularly keen bidders during 1895. The prospects, therefore, for 1896 are much brighter than for the past year, and a man would be foolish to drop out of the business just because he had happened to commence during an unfavorable season. In the older cheese districts there is little danger of the patrons quitting the factory, but it is the new patron of the new factory whose faith is sorely tried and who requires words of cheer and encouragement.

Country Roads.—Capt. Jas. Sheppard, Queenston, is a very successful fruit grower, and, as we all should be, he is also deeply interested in the question of better roads. Among the points made may be mentioned the following: The road-machine is an economical implement for grading, as it not only does better work but does it more cheaply than can be accomplished by the ordinary methods. A heavy roller should follow the grader, otherwise the teams will drive on each side of the freshly-graded portion, eventually cutting ruts on each side of the road. When these ruts become too deep in the wet weather, the teams will then be driven on the center of the road, which has not previously been packed, and which, consequently, will not bear the traffic. As a result the road receives three sets of ruts, and is practically ruined. On the other hand, had the road been rolled immediately after grading, the traffic from the beginning would have been on the center of the road, and by the time the fall rains came it would have possessed a much better bearing surface.

Large tile make very satisfactory culverts, being much less likely to get out of repair than the ordinary wooden culvert.

Stone walls for supporting embankments should "batter" from each side, and have the side next to the embankment just as well finished and as smooth as the face of the wall. The reason for this is very clear. Everyone knows that when water freezes it must expand, no matter what pressure may be applied to it. Consequently, when the water in the soil freezes it expands and lifts the soil which contains it. Therefore, if we have an upright wall, especially if it has a rough surface next the bank, the rising soil will exert such pressure that the wall must yield—no strength can withstand the force of freezing water. But if the wall "batters" *from* the bank, then when the soil is lifted by the frost it rises away from the wall and the pressure is lessened rather than increased.

G. E. DAY.

Corn and Cob Meal.

SIR,—In the last issue of your valuable paper you ask for correspondence on the subject of corn and cob meal. As a farmer, living in the south-western part of Ontario, where corn is the leading grain crop grown for feeding stock, I may say that in this section the practice of grinding corn, cob and all as a food for stock has long since passed the experimental stage, having been thoroughly tried. The unanimous opinion of those who have used it is: (1st) That corn and cob meal for cattle is much superior to corn meal, being more bulky, thus suiting the requirements of the bovine stomach; (2nd) that it is not a desirable food for horses or swine, being not as good as corn on the ear.

I am now feeding cattle on the corn and cob meal; they put on flesh faster and gain more according to the amount of corn fed than any other way I know of feeding it. I consider it pays to feed corn in this way, when the cost of grinding does not exceed six or seven cents per bag, even at the present low price of beef cattle. C. J. M.

Kent Co., Ont.

Mr. David Lawrence, of Oxford Co., Ont., whose excellent plan and description of hog pen appeared in the last issue of the FARMER'S ADVOCATE, writes, in addition, that he would recommend plastering the inside of the walls, at least as high as the pigs could reach, with cement—the same as the finishing coat of the floor. An occasional coat of whitewash adds to the appearance and healthfulness of the pens. Pigs will remove ordinary plaster off with their teeth. Through a typographical error, the diameter of the water tank was given as "5½ inches," when it obviously should have been 5½ feet.