

excess of 1871, and 6.74 inches in excess of 1870. With the exception of the month of May, however, the distribution of the rainfall, during the growing season, was greatly in favor of 1871: accounting, in great measure, for the crops of spring grain being better in this than in the preceding year. Thus in May we had, in 1871, 2.57 inches of rain; in 1870, 2.05; in June, 1871, 4.13 inches; in 1870, 2.93 inches; in July, 1871, 4.28 inches; 1870, 3.84 inches; in August, 1871, 5.24 inches; 1870, 3.7 inches; and although in the seven months, from April to October, 1871, had but .53 inch more rain than 1870, in the four months from April to July, 1871, had an excess over 1870 of 2.49, or say 2½ inches.

It may be further remarked, in reference to rainfall, that the meteorological records of the Agricultural Department strongly fortify the position of those of our farmers who prejudge the hay crop by the rainfall of the month of May; the rainfall, mean average for the State of New York, for this month, being recorded as in 1863, 4.66; 1864, 4.84; 1865, 4.41; 1866, 3.67; 1867, 6.69; 1868, 5.99; 1869, 3.86; 1870, 2.05; and 1871, 2.57 inches.

Of other crops and products, it is to be noted that there is an enormous yield of potatoes of unusually excellent quality, and free from disease. The price is low, but not yet below remunerative rates. This, it is believed, is the first year in which potatoes of the Early Rose variety have been taken to market by the canal-boat load. This sort has proved not only very early, but of good quality for winter use, and a good cropper; and it is quoted at this time, in the New York market, about 20 per cent higher than the Peachblow. Hops have been a moderate crop; but prices, owing to the failure of the crop in England, have reached very high figures. There has also been a very marked advance in wool, owing to the consumption caused by the Franco-German war; but it is feared that the rise in prices was too late to be of much benefit to American farmers.

The annual cattle show and fair of the society, held this year at the city of Albany, was a marked success, and the exhibition as a whole has never been surpassed in the history of the Society.

In the cattle department, besides the usual excellent show of Short Horns and Devons, and a larger turn out of Herefords than for some years previous, there was an exhibition of Ayrshires far superior to any ever before brought together in this state. In this class, competition extended beyond the limits of our own state, and some of the best animals shown were from Canada and New England. The gem of the class was the bull Mars, shown by Mr. John L. Gibb, of Quebec, while Messrs. Thompson, of Ontario,

and Birnie, of Massachusetts, showed herds of great merit, and carried off a number of prizes. In Jerseys, there was not only the largest entry at any of our fairs, but the highest quality and the closest competition. Of grade cattle the number was, as usual, small; and while it must be regretted that this practically most important of all the cattle classes should be so meagre at our state fairs, it is a satisfaction to know that it is gaining at our county and local exhibitions, showing that the state is really deriving direct and substantial benefit from the efforts for which the state of New York has so long been distinguished—to improve our cattle by the introduction of pure blood.

The entry of horses was not large, but the quality of the animals on exhibition has seldom, if ever, been equalled at any of our shows. This is especially true of the roadster class, which included a large proportion of animals of the Hambletonian and other strains of the Messenger blood, as well as many derived from other valuable families. In this department the show of breeding stock was larger than that of harness horses, and the studs of most of the eminent breeders in the state were represented.

In all the other classes of live stock, there was a good show, especially of long-woolled sheep, and of Essex and Berkshire pigs.

In the department of farm produce, the exhibition was quite equal to former years; and, notwithstanding the unpropitious season, the show of fruit was very respectable. In the vegetable hall, Messrs. Reisig & Hexamer, of New Castle, showed three hundred and eighteen varieties of potatoes, an exhibition almost unique and for which the executive committee awarded the large silver medal of the society. The committee desires also to acknowledge the spirited efforts of the exhibitors in the classes of fruits and flowers, in aid of the success of that part of the exhibition, and especially of Messrs. Briggs & Brother, Jas. Vicks, C. W. Crosman, and Ellwanger & Barry, of Rochester, and Louis Menand of Albany.

The show in the department of machinery and farm implements was stated by the vice-president in charge to be superior in many respects to that of any previous year. The interest in this part of the fair and the extent of the exhibition continue steadily to increase, and the improvement from year to year in the design and construction of the implement show is evident to the most careless observer. The machinery shown in operation forms one of the most interesting features of the society's annual exhibitions, and this department is not only among the most popular, but one of the most useful in the show, while it is

most gratifying to the officers of the society, as an evidence of appreciation of their efforts and of confidence in their impartiality, to meet here year after year the leading implement manufacturers of the country, either in person or represented by a most respectable and intelligent class of agents. In this department, thanks are especially due to Messrs. Townsend & Jackson, of Albany, who furnished, as their subscription to the expenses of the fair, the engine and all the line shafting and pulleys for driving the machinery shown in operation; and to Mr. H. R. Pierson, resident director of the New York Central and Hudson River Railroad Company, who granted the use of a locomotive boiler for the same purpose. Messrs. Townsend & Jackson's engine, though entirely new, performed admirably from the start, and was much admired.

The county and town societies continue prosperous, and their reports in many cases give gratifying evidence of progress and improvement. Almost all appear to be sustained and well managed. The American Dairymen's Association, which holds its annual meeting at Utica, continues to do a good work in diffusing more correct and scientific knowledge of the branch of agriculture in which its members are engaged; and the New York Dairymen's Association, established within the year, and which held its first meeting at Little Falls in January, promises to labour with equal energy and efficiency in the same field. The transactions of the latter association, and also of the American Fish Culturists' Association, at whose recent meeting at Albany very valuable papers were presented, will probably be embodied in the Transactions of this society.

The executive committee are grateful that they can report the state free from epizootic diseases during the most of the year, a fact for which there is the more cause for gratitude since the former law for the prevention of the introduction and spread of contagious diseases of animals expired in April, 1871, by limitation, and the state legislature of that year refused to enact any law for the protection of the herds of the state. The foot and mouth disease, the prevalence of which during the season of 1870 excited much alarm, and which, it was feared, would break out anew in the spring of 1871, seems to have disappeared entirely; and fortunately, the enactments which have been made by other states, both east and west, operate to afford a partial, but most useful, protection to the state of New York against the introduction of disease.

Of diseases not epizootic, there have been two out-breaks during the year of sufficient importance to require examination by the society. In July last, ver-