

A Western Packing Company on the Bacon Hog.

The following letter from a Chicago packing company to *The Breeders' Gazette* will be read with interest by those interested in our export bacon trade.

The best type of bacon pig is long and rangy: has a large percentage of lean meat, the fat being white and firm, and not too much of it. These qualities are specially to be found in the Yorkshire and Tamworth breeds, the latter making an ideal bacon pig, and for that purpose should be given a preference over all others.

The question of feed is also of importance to anyone who would raise the best bacon pigs. The almost exclusive corn-feeding practised by so many in the West makes too much fat, and, while corn fed to the above named breeds will make a better bacon than when fed to any other, it should be varied with mill-feed, barley, oats, peas, etc., which produce a larger percentage of lean and also better flavored meat. It is the general use of these breeds, together with the varied feeding, that enables the Canadians to obtain such a large premium for their pigs over those raised in the West. If there was a regular supply of such pigs on the market, here they would soon come to be appreciated, and would generally command a premium.

Whether it would pay a farmer to raise this class of animals even at a premium depends upon how he is situated for obtaining or growing feed at a moderate cost, but in any case the Tamworth will be found to make a good cross. They are prolific, gentle, and the sows are very good mothers. If there was a regular run of specially-fed bacon pigs at the Chicago yards, so that packers might have a regular brand upon a steady supply, there is no doubt but a premium would be paid for such stock.

INTERNATIONAL PACKING CO.

Chicago, Ill.

All packers engaged in the export bacon trade will agree with this description of what the bacon hog should be. The majority will also agree that a pig of the Tamworth type is what is wanted. Whether this type is found in the Tamworth only or in the Yorkshires, Berkshires, or any other breed, makes very little difference so long as the right kind of hog is produced. What the breeder and feeder will have to look to is a type of hog that will meet the requirements of the trade and at the same time return the greatest amount of profit to the farmer. The contention of many Americans that it will not pay them to give up the fat, corn fed type of hog for this more improved bacon type there are strong grounds for. But their conditions are quite different from what we have here. The Americans have a large home market of their own to supply, and therefore are to a certain extent independent of the export trade. But we in Canada have no such market open to us, and if our bacon trade is to assume large proportions we must look for an outlet for our products across the Atlantic, where the competition is most keen, and where it is absolutely necessary to send forward only the highest quality of bacon. Therefore, whether our neighbors to the south approve of the bacon type of hog or not, we must do so if we wish to secure a market for our products.

The question of feed is also a most important one, and is perhaps a more serious one for the western breeder than the quality of the breed. In a very large measure the inferior quality of western bacon is due to the large extent in which corn is fed in the West. While on the other hand we are largely of the opinion that the superior qualities which Canadian bacon has over the American are more due to the question of feed than of breed. It is only during the last few years that the real bacon type of hog has come to the front in Canada, and it may be several years yet before the bacon breeds are in general use in this country, as the above letter would lead people to believe. The majority of our feeders, however, feed other grains than corn. In fact, it is only within recent years that feeding corn to pigs has been practised to any great extent, and that only in a few sections where corn can be grown most successfully.

The feeding of corn to hogs for bacon production is, however, a serious mistake. It should not be fed at all for such a purpose. There are other feeds which, in this country, can be produced just as cheaply as corn, and which will fill the bill very much better. These are mill feeds, barley, oats, peas, etc., and for young pigs, roots.

One can hardly realize the difference there is between corn-fed and other bacon till he has examined the two together. We had the privilege of doing so lately, and there is as much difference in the quality of the fats in corn-fed bacon and bacon produced from other grains as there is between day and night. While the fat of the bacon produced from peas, etc., was firm and solid, that of the corn-fed bacon was soft, lacked body, and was as greasy as tallow. The former might be styled the substance, and the latter the shadow, so quickly does it melt away when cooking. In England the difference in prices obtained for corn-fed and other bacon amounts to from one to three cents per pound. This is a sufficient amount to knock the profit off a shipment of bacon, and consequently the packer on this side can afford to pay a good premium for bacon produced from the feeds above mentioned, as he also can for hogs of the true bacon type.

Over-Feeding Breeding Stock.

This subject is receiving some attention just now among English breeders, and is worth considering by our own stockmen. In Great Britain it seems to be more necessary for the breeder to exhibit at the leading shows than it does here, if he wishes to do any business. It has been the practice at all the leading English shows to have show animals, excepting the purely dairy breeds, made as fat as it is possible to make them. So much so is this the case that unless an animal is fat and well rounded off it does not stand much of a show for the prize. The breeder has either to keep his stock at home if they are in a natural condition, or to be at a great disadvantage in the show ring. This unfortunate condition of things has been brought about largely because prizes have been awarded to the animal which in its general outline was most pleasing to the eye rather than that it conformed to any particular type or breed. In some few cases judges have ignored the condition in which an animal was, and awarded the prize to the animal conforming most to the characteristics of the breed in which it was shown, but in the majority of instances the judges have gone with the crowd and given the prize to the animal most pleasing in general appearance.

Aside from the fact that in following such a practice the really best animal might not win the prize, there is the more serious matter to be considered, that of the effect the over-feeding necessary to produce a fat animal has upon its breeding properties. Many animals of good potent qualities are undoubtedly ruined for breeding purposes because of this practice of over-feeding for the show ring. And especially is this so at this season of the year, when the weather is warm. If all judges at shows would judge only from a breeding standpoint, or from a standpoint of conformity to type or form only, the difficulty complained of would soon be overcome. The agitation in Great Britain is along this line, and will likely bear fruit before very long.

As far as we are able to judge Canadian breeders are not as much troubled with this difficulty in connection with preparing show animals as the English breeders are, yet there is enough of it on this side to make the question of importance here. If the purpose of the show is to bring out the fattest animal, by all means give the prize to the one showing the greatest amount of fat. But if the purpose of the show is to bring out animals conforming to certain types or breeds or for breeding stock, then let the prizes be given for the best animal of these types or breeds whether he has been fattened up for the occasion or not. If this practice were followed entirely we believe that more breeders would exhibit than is the case at present. Of course it would not do to ignore the condition of the animal altogether. But if, for example, a breeder exhibiting a bull, were expected to have him in a condition best suited for service much better results would follow. It should not be considered necessary that in order

to stand a good chance in the show ring an animal should be carrying a few hundred pounds more fat than his owner would allow him to have if the exhibition were not ahead of him. If such were the rule there would be less danger of the breeding properties of stock being ruined when being fitted up for the show ring.

We are glad to see that a move has been made somewhat along this line by the Provincial Fat Stock and Dairy Show, though the motive for doing so has nothing to do with the breeding properties of stock. In the meantime we would like to hear from breeders and others in regard to this question of over-feeding, and if there is a danger to our breeding stock because of the manner in which judging is done at the leading fairs of this country.

The Outlook for Wool.

ALDERMAN HALLAM ON THE SITUATION: LOW PRICES.

Farmers are interested just now as to the outlook for wool. In order to obtain accurate information in regard to the wool situation, a representative of *FARMING* interviewed Alderman John Hallam, of this city, on the subject recently. As many of our readers know, Mr. Hallam is one of the largest exporters of Canadian wools, and is therefore in a position to speak with authority on wool matters.

Mr. Hallam thinks the prices for wool are very low, and the general outlook not very promising. The only market for Canadian long wools is the United States. These wools cannot be used by Canadian manufacturers profitably. Such being the case, they will have to be bought up at a price to suit the markets of the United States. In the leading United States markets common wool is now selling at from 28c. to 31c. per pound. No Canadian wool will bring in the United States markets more than 30c. per pound. If from this we deduct the 12 cents duty imposed by the American Government, only 18 cents is left, and from this must be deducted 1 cent per pound for freight and the expenses of handling, which leaves only 17 cents. American brokers charge 5 per cent. of the selling price (30 cents) for making sales, and consequently when everything is taken into account there is scarcely 16 cents left for the dealer here to work on.

Mr. Hallam is now paying 16 cents for wool, which according to the above is somewhat higher than the market would warrant. Mr. Hallam states that the local manufacturers on this side are taking advantage of the low prices to stock up their warehouses. When they are supplied he thinks prices will be low enough to admit of exporting being done. To make a profit out of exporting wool under present conditions wool would have to be bought at 15 cents per pound. Wool in England, of the same quality as our Canadian wool, is now selling at from 7½d. to 8d. per pound. Only recently a shipment of Irish wool was delivered in the United States for 28 cents per pound duty paid. From this it will be seen that other countries are experiencing low prices as well as our own.

Mr. Hallam is of the opinion, and which seems to be the current opinion also, that the present season will be a dragging one, and that unless there is a marked improvement in the English and the United States markets Canadian wool will have to be bought at from 15 cents to 16 cents per pound. It is thought by some wool experts that the surplus of this year's wool will have to be carried over till the United States is ready to take it. But as Mr. Hallam states we have been doing that for the past six years, and, therefore, it will not be a new experience. Unwashed and tub-washed wools cannot be sent to the United States. The duty on unwashed wool is 12 cents and on tub-washed 24 cents, and current prices there for these wools are such that it is impossible to ship them at a profit.