

## Timely Notes for January.

A Happy New Year, and may we learn from our former mistakes!

## THE INSTITUTE AS AN EDUCATOR.

Most farmers have a hazy idea that the farmers' institute is a sort of a mutual admiration society, and really can't see that it is an educator as well as a bond of union among the agriculturists of a neighborhood. To their shame, be it said, in several districts in each of the provinces the institutes have died of inanition, through the apathy of the surrounding farmers. It may be accepted as an axiom that those districts that cannot support an institute are those in which the farmers know so much of their calling that their farms are mortgaged, their credit gone, and their lives so oppressed with worry and hard work that there is "nothing in farming anyhow." It is the active, intelligent, pushing farmer who sees most clearly the need of more knowledge in his calling, more research, closer attention to details, etc. What wonder, then, that he succeeds in proportion to his knowledge and its timely application. In every trade or calling, from medicine down to tin, the operator, to be abreast of the times, must read and study his trade journal, and I can not, for the life of me, see why the farmer, who surely needs education as much as any other business man, does not read and study about his calling. What wonder, then, that "only a farmer" is fast becoming a by-word, when it should be a title of respect. Depend upon it, fellow-farmers, we all have a great deal to learn, and in no other way can we get practical knowledge as cheaply as from other farmers who have made a success of some particular branch or branches of their calling. In the institute we shall learn from one man the secret of his uniformly good crops of timothy and wheat, from another how he makes such a quantity and fine quality of butter, and from a third the manner in which by feeding pigs in an economical way he lifted the mortgage from his farm, and once more hold up his head as a free man. Farming is composed of so many different branches that no one man can expect to "know all about it," and "in the multitude of counsellors there is wisdom." Our government has been very generous in its grants to institutes, and has also sent practical men to lecture at meetings. The government also publishes for free distribution the proceedings and certain selected papers. The subscription asked from members is less than they would pay for a pound of tobacco, and the information gained from one lecture may be worth \$50 to every member in the saving of seed or dearly bought experience. "Great is the economy of intelligence," and it is an extremely short-sighted policy to neglect that readiest, handiest and cheapest source of information on our life-worth—the farmers' institute.

## BUYING A BULL.

First and foremost, what do you want a bull for? To produce offspring somewhat like himself, or some indistinguishable mongrel? I am tempted to pen these few remarks by the conduct of an acquaintance of mine, who prides himself on being pretty shrewd. He has been running a dairy farm for years, and through a certain amount of cunning and meanness of living, over-working wife, children and hired men, he has managed to amass a competence. He has been breeding first to a Shorthorn (high grade), then to an Ayrshire grade, then back to mongrels of two or three different breeds, and now he is trying to buy cheap a Holstein grade, to breed fine milkers from—at least, so he says. It is needless to say he has as choice a lot of scrub stock of every conceivable color and shape as can be found. He does not make 100 pounds of butter per cow per year, and yet he can't see that he is working for fun, and such fun!!

If this man will weed out his unprofitable cows, for even he has some old veterans that are profitable, and then buy a bull of some pure breed, whether Shorthorn, Ayrshire, Holstein, etc., whichever he may fancy, and then keep on with that particular breed, he will, in a few years, have a herd of dairy cattle that will lessen his work, give his wife a chance to recover her lost spirits, and increase his income. But he must remember that a good bull, like everything else good, will command a good price, and will also require good care, and he will find that it *pays, pays, pays!!!*

## GENERAL.

Many farmers keep calves and boars over the winter on the mistaken idea that they are hardier. Suppose they are—which they are not—they are certainly depreciated in value by being left entire.

Feed your colts grain just as regularly as you do your work horses—only in proportion to size—and you will not regret it.

Do you need that "black snake" whip for your teams? Wouldn't a few more good oats, and a good grooming once a day be better?

You can't make pigs grow and keep them in a freezing condition. Keep them warm or sell them—you will lose less by so doing.

Try and make those "strippers" pay for their food. Don't let them dry up five months after calving.

The city and town dairymen now are scouring the country for fresh cows. Don't be tempted to sell your best cow—that is, of course, if you know which is your best. Do you, or are you guessing at it?

What are you going to do about mates for your poultry this year? Are you going to keep on breeding scrubs?

## Our Scottish Letter.

The subject exciting most interest at present in Scotland is the proposal to found a new agricultural paper of a class and character hitherto unknown in Scotland. The matter has been long talked about, and the paper is now almost an accomplished fact. The proprietors are a body of representative Scottish and North of England agriculturists. The name of the paper will be The Scottish Farmer, and Mr. Archibald MacNeillage has been appointed editor. The first number will appear in the beginning of January, and it will be published weekly thereafter. For obvious reasons it would be out of place for me to say more in this column than that I hope there will be many readers of the new paper.

The greatest event of the month of November was the Lochburnie sale of Hackneys and Clydesdales. The horses were the joint property of Messrs. James Johnston, Lochburnie, and Alexander Scott, Berryyards Farm, Greenock, both of whom are well-known in the Clydesdale world, and by this sale they have established a high reputation for Hackneys. First-rate prices were made at the sale, 420 gs. and 400 gs. having been paid for the Hackney stallions Dereham Lieutenant and Merry Stanton by the Messrs. Galbraith, Janesville, Wis. Several mares and fillies also made high figures, a pony mare, Little Midget, drawing 175 gs., and others of a greater size drawing up to 200 gs. It is long since there was so extensive a one day's sale in Scotland, and the Hackney prices mark a new era in the breeding of light horses north of the Tweed.

The home trade in Clydesdales continues to be fairly brisk. A considerable number of the better class horses have already been hired for next season, including Mr. James Lockhart's two horses, Mains of Airies and Handsome Prince, Mr. William Montgomery's Belvidere, Messrs. P. & W. Crawford's Prince of Carruchaie, Crusader of Orchardmains, Goldfinder, Ardnacraig, Prince Robert and Flashwood's Best, Mr. James Johnston's Orlando, Mr. W. Renwick's Prince Alexander, Mr. W. S. Park's Gallant Poteath and Mr. Alexander Scott's Lawrence Again. Lord Polwarth has hired the champion horse, Prince Alexander, to serve thirty of his own mares at £10 each at service, with £10 additional for each mare proving in foal. Banffshire and Morayshire, in the North, and Wigtownshire and Kirkcubright, in the South, have secured most of the other horses; Ayrshire takes Goldfinder and Crusader, and Belvidere goes to Stirling.

A very noteworthy figure in the Clydesdale world has disappeared in the person of Mr. Hugh Crawford, Kilbarran, the best respected of all Scottish horse dealers. He died very suddenly, while transacting business in the All-Hallow Fair at Edinburgh a fortnight ago. He was a genial, kindly man, and enjoyed the reputation of being thoroughly reliable.

SCOTLAND YET.

## More Hogs Wanted.

BY WM. DAVIES, TORONTO.

On every hand we hear of the depression of agriculture, and the farmer, turn which way he will, is met by distressingly low prices. Has he two or three hundred bushels of wheat in his granary? He finds if he teams it to Toronto market he can get 60 to 65 cents; this will not pay him for the seed sown and the labor expended. If he wishes to realize on barley, which ought to have brought a good price last fall, unless it is a very bright and plump sample he will have to take about 32 cents, which makes him wish he had let the land lie fallow. But surely, though wheat and barley are non-remunerative, oats will do well; but no, they also are very low. It is true potatoes are dear, but of this crop very few farmers have any.

We now turn to live stock, beginning with horses, but the honest yeoman who has these can hardly give them away. Cattle and sheep are disappointing also, but hogs are higher than for many years, and are likely to keep up, as they are scarce all over the world. It is strange that with grain so low, that there are not twice as many hogs fed in Ontario and Manitoba.

We are now paying 6 cents live weight, and cannot get half enough for our requirements. This branch of farming is only in its infancy, and we believe that the farmer who goes into it with intelligence, courage and enterprise, will reap a rich reward. The foregoing applies with greater force to the farmers of Manitoba, as we read in the Trade Bulletin that barley only nets the farmers there 9 cents per bushel. Many farmers appear to have almost as great a dislike to hogs as the Hebrews. They feed a lot of useless horses, that no one wants at any price, which are eating their heads off; and in the fall many have a lot of steers, two-year-old, for which they get about 2 cents per pound; but sorry a brood sow do you find, though she would bring two litters a year, which could be sold, at six months old, for from \$8 to \$10 each. The Dominion and Ontario governments have issued bulletins, giving results of experiments, proving clearly that by feeding coarse grain to pigs it will net the farmer a much higher price. They also show that to make the most of hogs they should be fattened and sold young. Every intelligent farmer will also see the advantage of keeping the manure on his farm.

There is a prospect of another large export bacon factory starting in London, and doubtless others will follow if the promoters can be assured of a steady and sufficient supply of the raw material. If the statements that have recently appeared in the press are true, regarding the requirements of the new establishment in London, 2,000 live hogs per week will be wanted in Ontario and Quebec next season. Now is the time for farmers to make preparations to meet this demand.

## FIRST PRIZE ESSAY.

## The Care and Feeding of Breeding Ewes in Winter and Spring.

BY WM. AND J. WALLACE, NIVERVILLE, MAN.

In dealing with this subject, it may be well first to say a few words as to the date on which the rams should be put to the ewes. Our experience in Manitoba leads us to believe that the beginning of November is the most suitable time. The ewes are then in good condition for service, having had the run of the stubbles and a few acres of rape on the summerfallow for three or four weeks previously. The lambs will come in the beginning of April, the period of gestation being five months. This date may be considered too early by some sheep farmers, but if the coupling is delayed till say 1st December, the ewes will probably be losing in condition instead of improving, and that, with the colder and stormier weather then likely to be prevailing, will result in a smaller crop of lambs. It is also convenient to have the lambing over in April at the homestead, before the stock is scattered over the prairie. One vigorous ram should serve fifty ewes, and he should be left with them at least five weeks, to give every ewe a double chance.

The winter having fairly set in, the flock will no longer seek to go a-field, but will keep near the shelter of the farm buildings. It is not necessary that they should be shut up under cover. On the contrary, it is to their advantage that they be as much as possible in the open air. On no account should they be confined in a building so close and warm that their wool is always damp. At the same time a comfortable shed, wind and water-tight, should be provided, in which they can shelter at night and during stormy weather. It is a good plan to have a shed forming three sides of a square, with the hay or straw stack on the fourth side, the whole forming a yard in which the flock can spend most of their time in the open air. Sheep can stand a great deal of dry cold, but they should not be exposed to draughts.

We have now to consider the feeding of the flock; and here we find that sheep farming and grain growing go very well together in Manitoba, as the straw stack furnishes the most important part of their food during the winter months. They eat the chaff greedily and thrive well on it. It should be scattered over the yard daily for them to pick up. If they get direct access to the straw stack, they will soon get on the top of it and make it useless, unless the walls are kept perpendicular; and the fleece of any open-wooled sheep will get filled with chaff. With plenty of straw and chaff, supplemented by a little hay fed to them in the sheds at night and on stormy days, the flock will be kept in good thriving condition, until near lambing time. We do not consider it advisable to feed grain to lambing ewes during winter, as a fat ewe invariably produces a small lamb, and she runs a greater risk from inflammation at lambing time than if she were in moderate condition. As the lambing time approaches, the ewes should have a daily ration of bran and linseed or linseed cake, which acts as a laxative both to the ewe and its offspring—preventing constipation, which frequently causes death in young lambs. Great care should be taken when the ewes are heavy with lamb that there is no crushing at the feeding troughs, and in passing through doors or gateways, and that cattle or horses should not be allowed among them, as any rough treatment is likely to make them cast lamb. The flock now requires very close attention, as a considerable proportion of the ewes will require some assistance in lambing. This, however, should not be given rashly or hastily, but only after the ewe has been showing restlessness for some time, which she does by bleating, pawing the ground, rising up and lying down frequently, etc. A little experience soon teaches one when nature should be assisted.

It will now be found a great convenience to have part of the shed sub-divided into small pens by movable hurdles. Into these each ewe, as soon as lambing, is put with her progeny, where they remain a few days, until quite taken with each other, when they can be put into a larger division along with others at the same stage. The ewes should now be generously fed with bran, oats, linseed cake and cut turnips, if they can be got, along with the best of the hay that has been cut and cured green. Mixed dry land hay is better than rank sough hay. Abundance of good water should be supplied.

This feeding should be continued until there is a full bite of grass, and when this often long-looked-for consummation is reached, the shepherd's labors and anxieties are considerably lightened for another season.

## The Theory and Practice of Sheep Breeding in Manitoba.

BY D. F. WILSON, BRANDON.

The successful wintering of sheep should begin in the fall, for if allowed to loose flesh at that time of the year they do not thrive during the winter as they otherwise would. There was an old saying about sheep in Ontario, "Well Novembered is half wintered," and the same is true of Manitoba; if they can have the run of a summerfallow which has been sown with turnips or rape they will go into winter quarters in splendid shape, though care must be taken not to change too suddenly from succulent to all dry feed. Another thing in which care is required is to have the ewes doing well at the time the ram is turned in with them. In order to get a large percentage of lambs the sheep should be increasing in weight at this time, and as many sheepmen do not want lambs before May, there will be