

# The Farming World

For Farmers and Stockmen

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## An English Opinion

The "Farming World," of Toronto, Canada, for September 4th issue, was a special number, and is just to hand. It gives particulars of the annual great fair at Toronto. It is a splendidly got up number, and creditable alike to its editor and printers. As a guide to Dominion farming, British readers would find this publication of the greatest service.

*The Rural World, London, England.*

## The Slump in Hogs

**T**HE sudden drop in the prices for bacon hogs last week came no doubt as a surprise to many farmers who had been counting upon the high values of the past few months being maintained for some time. But a glance at the market and the conditions affecting the export bacon trade must convince one that these high values could not have been maintained till the end of the year. In fact, some in the trade claim that the drop in prices should have come a month ago and that the high values during October, while benefiting the farmer, meant serious losses to the packers who will not be able to sell the product for nearly what it cost them. However this may be, we are not in a position to state. That the farmer has had good prices for several months back no one will dispute and if lower values follow he has perhaps no reason to complain.

A drop from \$5.75 as reported in last week's market report to \$4.75 per cwt. means a big slice off the profits from hog raising. But this should not discourage farmers who are in the business. The fat and the lean periods must come in all trades and people in business or in the production of any marketable article must be governed by the law of averages. Judged from this standard the prices for bacon hogs for 1900 will average high and it is upon this basis that profits must be fixed. But in doing so the farmers should, as we pointed out in dealing with this question in THE FARMING WORLD of June 12 last, endeavor to so arrange their supply of hogs as to have the largest deliveries during the summer months when prices are high and as few as possible to dispose of in the fall when prices invariably are lower.

There does not, however, appear to be much advancement in this direction. The deliveries of hogs on Toronto market on October 26 were 4,013, while on June 8, when choice bacon hogs sold for \$6.87½, per cwt. the deliveries were only 1,600. During July, August and September last, when the product from the high priced summer hogs was placed on the British market, our packers were not able to supply much more than 50 per cent. of the bacon the English trade could take. But

now, at the approach of the Christmas trade, when the markets are flooded with poultry and game of all kinds, and the demand for bacon falls off very materially, there is the largest supply of Canadian bacon to go forward and our farmers have the most hogs to sell. To remedy this the packer and the farmer must co-operate more than they do and regulate the supply more in keeping with the demand.

But the Canadian farmer is not the only producer who will suffer from this drop in values. Last week Danish bacon dropped 7s. per cwt. as compared with the week previous, which means a shrinkage of more than \$1 per cwt in the price the Danish farmer gets for his hogs.

Then prices are still better than they were at this time a year ago. On Oct. 28, 1899, select bacon hogs sold on Toronto market at \$4.37½ per cwt., and thick fats at \$4 per cwt. A great many cheese factory hogs are put upon the market at this season of the year, which has increased the supply very much and perhaps reduced values more than they would otherwise be.

The general conditions affecting the bacon trade, notwithstanding this lowering of values, are not at all discouraging. The supplies of bacon in England have been short as compared with last year. During the past few months the weekly killings in Denmark have been about 5,000 short as compared with corresponding weeks of last year. Then, as we have already stated, the Canadian supply has been short, so that prospects are good for a reaction in trade as soon as the Christmas season is over. And if values do not go any lower than they are at the present time, with the prospects of a rise towards the beginning of the year, the situation is on the whole a very hopeful one.

There has been a great improvement in the finishing of bacon hogs this year. There have been fewer skips and undersized hogs this summer than for some years back, showing that our farmers are learning better to breed and feed hogs for the bacon trade. All signs point to rapid advancement along many lines in connection with the export bacon trade in this country. The quality is improving and there is a growing demand for the Canadian article in Great Britain. If, as we have already pointed out, farmers can adjust their supply more in keeping with the demand, there is no reason why the business cannot be largely increased with better profits for all concerned.

## Dr. Mills Returns

Dr. Mills, President of the Ontario Agricultural College, returned last week from Europe, looking exceptionally well. A short report of an interview, giving a brief account of his trip, appears in the Gazette Department this week. Dr. Mills has promised a special article for these columns later on, dealing more fully with European agriculture.