

DOMINION DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

LIVE STOCK BRANCH.

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CASTRATION AND DOCKING.

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One prominent writer on agricultural topics has characterized the failure to castrate male lambs as "the great neglect" in sheep husbandry. There is no doubt that this negligence has been a decided drawback to the progress of the sheep industry in Canada. Farmers who are engaged in raising horses do not for one moment contemplate leaving all male offspring entire. Nor do cattlemen forget to castrate bull calves, unless they are intended for breeding purposes. Hog raisers have realized that it is necessary to unsex their grade boars and some even deprive the females of their ovaries, in order to insure the best gains in weight. There is no justifiable reason why sheep raisers should be so careless in this regard. Nevertheless, cold facts demonstrate that, unfortunately, emasculation of grade rams is not practised to the extent it should be. Why castration should be neglected in this class of live stock is difficult to understand. Probably the greater docility of the ram compared with the bull or stallion may afford an explanation. The ram will not break down fences as will the stallion, nor gore attendants to death as the bull. Dire calamities always impress people. It should not be necessary, however, for deaths to occur before warnings are heeded. Fortunately for mankind, rams are not so ferocious as bulls. If they were, imagine the continual danger which would be the result of the number of entire rams which are to be found in every district where sheep are raised.

Docking is also neglected to fully as great a degree as castration. Both sexes should be docked. The main argument against the docking of horses is that the natural means of fly protection is destroyed. In the case of sheep, this argument cannot be raised, because the tail is so heavy as to prevent switching and, moreover,