

THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE & HOME MAGAZINE

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The Beef Cattle Industry.

Our Chicago market report in this issue mentions the fact that a leading firm of Canadian live stock shippers is now in Chicago exporting fat cattle to Great Britain. Last year several of our principal dealers did considerable business of the same sort in Western States markets. The foregoing fact is pregnant with meaning. Our dealers are evidently across the lines principally to take advantage of the available supplies of superior U. S. fat cattle, having at the same time the advantage of favorable freight rates. The latter phase of the question may be more advantageously readjusted through mutual concessions by the U. S. and Canadian authorities as to shipping facilities by Eastern States ports on the one hand and the St. Lawrence on the other. But if Canadian shippers have to go to the States to do export business—and, presumably, they find it profitable—then is there not room for further development of beef cattle raising in Canada? In 1877 we only shipped some 6,940 head, and our export trade reached its height in 1890, when the total was 123,000. In 1895 it was 96,593, and up to the present time the 1896 outgo has been some 85,277 head.

The reports of the Montreal and Toronto markets in this issue of the ADVOCATE appear to tell the same story, that the export trade has dropped off during the past few weeks because there is nothing up to the export market offering, except, perhaps, those going forward from Manitoba, and even those would have been the better of a little more time on the prairie.

"No cloud but has a silver lining," and surely the silver lining of the cloud that has so long overshadowed the beef cattle industry is now becoming visible. In Ontario low prices and scarcity of feed last season caused everything—big and little, old and young—that would fetch money and save feed to be got rid of, train loads of young things being shipped away to the Western ranches. In Manitoba everything that was considered old enough, or big enough, was utilized last winter to transform the surplus low grade wheat and coarse feed into cash; droves of young cattle have also been shipped to the West. The increasing use of dairy sires, and the neglect of many farmers in not keeping up during times of low prices the quality of their stock, leave comparatively few steers of the desirable quality to feed for the export trade. Our dairy herds have improved wonderfully, but not to the same extent our beef cattle.

True, the United States have another big corn crop—some 2,500,000,000 bushels—but a leading authority claims that everything that was fit was fed last winter, and that stockers of quality are really scarce, while the demand for them is reported as remarkable, over 1,000 carloads having been bought in one week lately from the Chicago, Omaha, and Kansas City yards.

The following extract from a letter from the extensive cattle exporters, Messrs. Mullins & Wilson, who are now permanently located in Winnipeg, will be of interest in this connection:—

To the Editor FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

Your favor of yesterday received. In reply, would say that prospects for feeding cattle are all right for the coming season. The distilleries are not feeding the usual number in the East this winter, and that is an important factor in farmers feeding here, as the space on outgoing vessels has to be filled. Of course the crop of corn is big in the States, but they have not got the cattle to feed; and the silver question has been a trouble to the farmers there, as the private banks and others would not advance money to feeders until things are settled. It certainly would be well for the farmers to have their cattle in good shape in the face of so much rough feed as there is this fall. The best class of stock to feed would be steers from 1,100 to 1,200 lbs.—not too heavy, but finished.

Yours truly, MULLINS & WILSON.

Those who know anything about cattle know that the only kind that can be finished to fill the requirements of the exporter are good, smooth, sappy fellows, the progeny of blooded sires of the beef type. They cannot be made from narrow, leggy, scrub-begot steers. To buy the quality stocker at the right price may not be easy, but those who have been quietly breeding the cows to good beef bulls, and caring for the steer calves, should now be "in it." When steers sell at a profit there will be no trouble to sell pure-bred beef bulls of the right sort at a profit. At the present time real good stockers are in keen demand in Ontario.

Referring to the letter of Messrs. Mullins & Wilson, we are not sure that the idea of trying to rear small sized but thoroughly finished steers works out well, as a rule, in actual practice. That it can be done is possible, partly by breeding, but more directly by feeding somewhat on the plan adopted by breeders who, by heavy yet skillful management at the manger, know how to fit their fat stock to win in the showing. We question, also, the propriety of breeding from immature sires and then discarding them at two and a half or three years old.

From the various causes indicated above, we find coming on the Montreal and Toronto markets too great a quantity of weedy, undersized animals of the "canning factory" type, which are neither

good butchers' cattle nor AI stockers. On this subject we commend the timely article, in another column, from "A Dumfries Farmer," which gives the pith of his many years' successful experience in rearing and feeding beef cattle. If our export beef cattle trade is to develop we must have more of the right sort for shipment, and our shippers must have the best available transportation facilities. If the former are forthcoming the latter can be secured.

The first great blow to the Canadian cattle trade was the British embargo, now permanent; but in the season of the year when we have cattle to ship slaughter-on-landing works very satisfactorily. It may be that all foreign meat will yet have to be branded as such in Britain in order to harass the trade, though if we send prime beeves we need not fear to have "CANADIAN" branded honestly on their carcasses. Another protectionist scheme was lately proposed in England, viz., to stop the landing of cattle even for slaughter. In which event we would be driven into a dressed meat trade and closer relations with the United States by breaking down, both as to breeding and ordinary cattle, the international quarantine which has proved a vexatious disadvantage and loss to both countries. Its abolition would be in some respects a gain to Canada, and in others to the States; but it is safe to say that from first to last the cattle quarantine has been regarded as a nuisance on both sides of the line.

Winter Care of Horses.

As winter comes on many of the farm horses that have worked faithfully six days in the week from the opening of spring are released from labor for three or four months. The question arises, How can these be best and most economically wintered? It goes without saying that an abrupt cessation from heavy labor is altogether opposed to health in man or beast. The thing to do, then, is to lower the diet and divide the last portion of the season's work among all the teams, gradually lessening the labor of those we wish to "turn out" for the winter. To prevent excessive stocking for a few weeks after labor ceases is not an easy matter. It may be prevented from reaching a harmful stage by reducing the amount of grain fed and by feeding boiled oats, with considerable bran, in the place of the ordinary evening meal, along with which a tablespoonful of Glauber's salts may be added three or four times a week, except the animal be in low condition, when a tonic should take its place, such as iodide of iron, in dram doses, every night for a week or ten days. Some green food should also be given, such as carrots or turnips, at noon during the winter months. Stocking can also be materially lessened by gentle pressure of bandages from the fetlock up to hock, applied at night and removed in the morning. It is also well to turn the horses out two or three hours daily when the weather will allow. In all cases the object in view is to acquire the maximum of strength and buoyancy of spirits with the expenditure of the minimum amount of money and labor. Keeping an animal in good condition means that the body and limbs are in the most vigorous and healthy form. This can be accomplished only by observing hygienic rules. He should have comfortable quarters, good grooming, good food, and proper exercise. These, however, he is not likely to receive on most farms; nor, perhaps, is so much care profitable, especially the grooming, except in the case of high-priced breeding stock and speeding horses that have come in from a season's campaign, to enter upon it again the following spring.

Ocean Carriage of Live Stock.

Mention has been made by several writers in the ADVOCATE of the excellence of the establishments where Canadian fat cattle are landed and often fed for a few days prior to slaughter. It is also stated that the loss by accidents or disease is remarkably low by every regular cattle liner. Two of the latest additions to the Cunard fleet are cited as probably showing the least loss of any vessels in the trade, though all are phenomenally good. The "Corinthia" has, since her first sailing from Boston, embarked 7,700 head of cattle, of which she has delivered at the Woodside lairage no less than 7,602, or a loss only slightly in excess of one-tenth of one per cent. Her sister ship, the "Sylvania," however, shows even more remarkable results, for out of 9,097 bullocks shipped at Boston she delivered no less than 9,004 at the Birkenhead lairages, a thing unprecedented in the history of cattle-carrying. Any agitation, therefore, for the restriction of cattle imports on the ground of cruelty to animals is barred by the consideration of facts such as these, which also demonstrate that the present arrangements for ocean carriage of live stock on regular liners are as nearly perfect as could possibly be arranged.

Better Every Year.

Wesley Smith, Peel Co., Ont.:—"My father has been a subscriber to your valuable paper (the FARMER'S ADVOCATE) for a number of years, and we are more pleased with it every year."

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pen; the cheapest is generally the best. As to feed, yearly I think more and more of cabbage. It is not only safer than rape, but no feed is equal to it at this season for putting on flesh.

A friend wrote me the other day, saying: "By your advice, I grew cabbage in the root field and treated them in the same manner. I have an immense crop."

They may be kept in piles of any length by pulling and placing them heads down (roots left on) four wide, then in spaces 3, next tier 2, with one for apex. Cover with straw and light sprinkling of soil, or, better, turnip-tops. They will stand as much frost as a swede.