

The General-purpose Horse at Fairs.

Editor "The Farmer's Advocate"

I should like to see a word in your paper regarding a small matter that causes considerable dissatisfaction among certain exhibitors at the local fairs. I have attended several county and township fairs this autumn, and heard the same remarks at each. It is in the horse classes that the trouble occurs. In the Draft, Agricultural and Delivery classes, more especially in the two last mentioned, one sees a great variety of horse-flesh, and an exhibitor, losing in one class, sees that he might have had a very good chance in the other; asks why the powers-that-be do not state an approximate weight for each type of horse. It is discouraging for a man with a really good team to be thrown out because he has entered in the wrong class, and we all know that there is some difference of opinion as to what makes up such a vague class of horse as the "general purpose," or the really useful animal for agricultural purposes. Would it not be a simple matter to state in the prize lists a rough weight for each class of horses? Of course, these remarks do not refer to men who exhibit horses of pure breeding; a pure-bred animal has his own class, and no mistakes can occur. But there are many horses in the local fairs that are good individuals and decidedly useful animals, and we want to see their owners bring them out and compete in uniform classes.

There is one other thing about the horse exhibits at the country fairs that is to me hard to understand. Who has attended such a fair, and not heard through the caller's megaphone, "General-purpose brood mares!" What is a general-purpose brood mare, and to what would one breed her to get a general-purpose colt? Is she not a scrub, pure and simple? If not, why is she not entered in the class for her own breed? The general-purpose brood mare seems to me to give the lie to all the recognized laws of breeding, and there should be no such class in our prize lists. E. F. O.

[Note.—On page 1554 of our Sept. 29th issue, this very point was emphasized in our editorial columns. There is no strictly general-purpose breed; there is no distinct general-purpose market class; consequently, there is no uniform standard whereby to measure this class, and, as a result, farm chunks, light drafters and expressers or vanners, all compete in this undefined and at least not easily definable class.—Editor.]

LIVE STOCK.

Profitable Sows.

There is only one type of brood sow that should be maintained on any farm, and that is the kind that may be relied upon to pay its way every year. When pork is as high-priced as it is now, there is a strong tendency to retain even the unsatisfactory females, and take a chance on their producing profitably next spring. But a desirable type of gilt from a proven mother will make a much safer proposition than the older sow that cannot be relied on. Thus, in going over the brood sows at this time with the purpose of selecting the mothers for next year's pigs, one should first make a careful selection from the present breeding group. For each sow, make a note of the number of pigs farrowed, the strength and character of the litter, the disposition of the sow as a mother, the number of pigs raised from the litter, and the breeding tendencies of the sow. If she fails seriously in one or two of these characteristics, mark her as one to be parted from, and head her for the market.

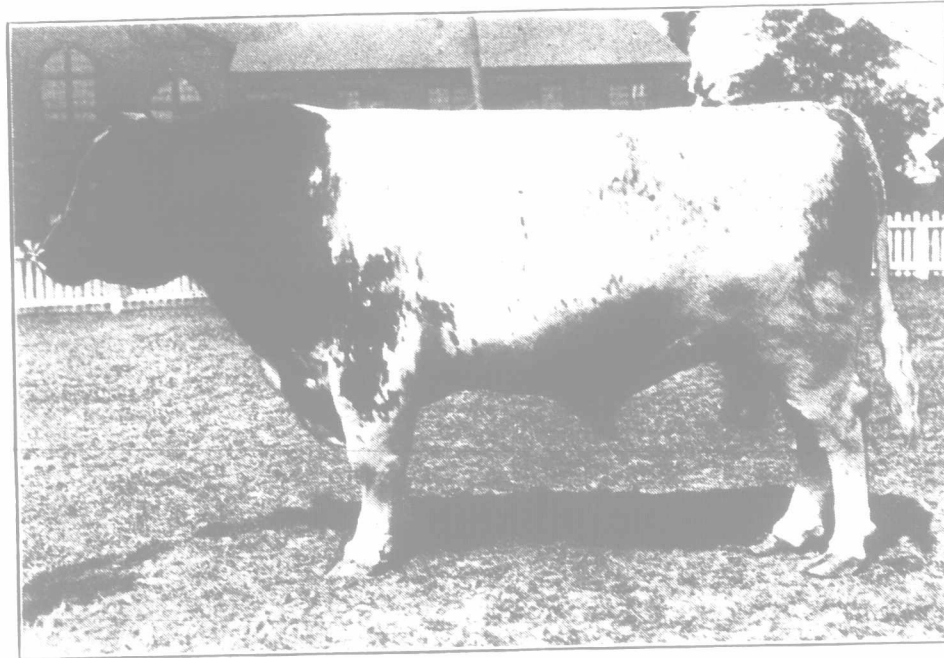
To replace these questionable breeders, great care should be taken in selecting their successors. If one is breeding pure-breds, the first requirement that must be made in the selection of sows is that they fulfil the breed type demands. Aside from that one requisite, the breeder of pure-breds and of grades should follow much the same system of selection. The sows should be essentially feminine; they should show no coarseness of shoulder, hair, bone or head; gentleness should characterize them; a long middle indicative of broodiness, must be present; the teats should be counted, and a preference given to the otherwise good sow with the greater number of normal teats. A vigorous constitution, as indicated by a clear eye, a healthy skin, an active temperament; a deep, broad chest, and a low, full flank, can never be overlooked, for the task of the brood sow is not light. The brood sow should be nearly as possible possess the conformation which is sought in the marketable progeny which she is to produce; consequently, smoothness and depth at shoulders, a strong, slightly-arched back, a wide loin and rump; good depth of body, flank and thighs, with desirable spring of rib, should be characteristic of the breeding stock of pigs. Too much emphasis cannot well be laid on the feet and legs. If the young sow proves a successful breeder, she will be retained as long as she proves herself so, which may mean five or six years. For

such a period of really useful service, the strongest kind of feet and pasterns are essential. With the brood sow, more than any other class of breeding female, is there likelihood of breaking down in the pasterns and feet, rendering the animal to a greater or less degree incapable of her highest capacities. Moreover, if there is any marked tendency to weakness in these parts, the offspring is almost certain to possess it, and they, in turn, cannot be as active, as healthy, or, consequently, as profitable, hogs. Quality, as shown in fine, clear bone, a healthy skin of desirable thickness, a trim head, smooth shoulders, and a fine coat of hair, deserves the consideration of every man in his hog-breeding operations.

A limited number of brood sows, but a greater production of better stock from them, should be kept in mind by breeders generally.

Notes from Australia.

There was a great gathering of fleecy beauties at the Sydney, New South Wales, Sheep Show last July. It is claimed that this exhibition sees the biggest collection of aristocratic Merinos in the world. The island State of Tasmania won with Sylvander, that comes from Esk Vale, and this is the third successive win for that flock. This ram was afterwards sold for 450 guineas to go to South Africa. A ram called Patron II., which beat Sylvander at a Tasmanian show a few weeks before, was sold privately for 800 guineas. He was undoubtedly the best animal of the two, but lacked condition. The highest-priced ram of the Fair, however, was Dandie Dimmont, which fetched 1,550 guineas, and goes to South Australia. He was not a competitor at the show. The South Africans are buying heavily of Merinos in Australia this year, believing that they can



Archer's First -72833=.

Short-horn bull, three years old. Second in class, Toronto. First and reserve champion, Western Fair, London, 1910. Bred and owned by John Gardhouse & Sons, Highfield, Ont.

produce fine wool, equal to Australia, and they are not sparing any money to back their opinion. The Australians are now saying that South Africa should reciprocate this freedom of trade by taking off the prohibition on ostriches and Angora goats, so that Australia might procure some birds and animals to tone up those industries.

Each season in the shearing sheds sees great competition to decide who is the "ringer." The latter's highest tally there stands a record for the next shed, and so the gang carries on till the end of the season. Some years ago, Jack Howe sheared 321 sheep in eight hours—a record never beaten. He used hand shears, but the sheep in those days carried less wool than they do now. days, besides, none but machine shears are now used. The smartest men to-day do not get through many more than 250 when at top speed, but, at the rate of 21s. per hundred, this means money to the expert.

George Jeffry, one time wool expert in South Australia, on his return from a visit to America, said he considered that the wool in the United States was not equal to the finest Australian for length of staple. The soundness of some of the wool, however, was such that growers might well be proud of it. Americans, he said, had a lot to learn in the way of packing wool for the markets, as clips were sent out in a deplorable condition. Nothing was taken off the fleece, while it was tied up with a rough hemp string.

The farming classes in Australia have at last politically awakened. For years they did not allow party politics to enter their deliberations at

the annual conferences. In those times they were equally divided between free trade and the protection of State policies. Federation swept away this old bone of contention, and gave the country a protective tariff. Since then the Labor Party has assumed the reins of Government, and this has changed the issue. The conventions this year in at least two of the States have decided to become political entities, and put men of their own cult into the various parliaments. The action, of course, multiplies the parties in the House of Parliament, but the farmers contend that it is nearly time they took a hand at the game, and all can follow them who feel so inclined.

There was a marked difference this year at the Australian Sheep Show between the class of sheep which won the prizes and those securing the best average at the sales. Several rams brought more than the grand champion, one twice as much, and one four times the price. The latter, however, was not exhibited. The wool-growers will not in these days buy the type of sheep to which expert judges award highest honors. The demand now is for the large-framed, plain-bodied old type. In some cases the wrinkles and folds have almost disappeared. From the point of view of the buyer out after practical propositions, the great sales were ideal, as he was able to get for a few guineas rams which years ago would have cost hundreds.

Rhodes grass, imported originally from South Africa, is making extraordinary headway in the grazing districts of East Australia. It is declared to be to that part what that wonderful grass, *Paspalum dilatatum*, is to the coastal dairy districts. In some parts, Rhodes grass has measured nine feet high.

Sheep-breeders in different altitudes in Australia raise Merinos of distinct characteristics. The difficulty with some is that they cannot keep the wool dense enough on the flock sheep as these increase in age, unless the stud animals are heavily folded, and the tendency is to breed out the folds as far as possible. In South Australia there is a distinct aversion to folds anywhere excepting on the neck. In recent years, in that State, much has been done to grow rams' necks on the ewes, thus considerably enhancing the carrying capacity of the flocks. For a while the fashion was to breed heavy wool on the heads and faces, but it was found that this was a drawback, as the shears were thus blinded by the wool, and could not see their way about in the paddocks.

Shearing is carried out by contractors at nearly all the large stations in Australia. The owners of the plant engage expert men at the schedule rates of 21s. per 100, and the gang go from one shed to another. This season, the most successful gang got through 500,000 sheep. In addition, there are co-operative gangs, who share equally. The old plan was for the sheds to engage the men, and each stood to his own tally. But there was continual trouble about wet sheep. Where the men are on piecework now, they are not so particular about these things, and, with the aid of electric light, work late and early to get done.

New Zealand utilizes some of its prison labor in land development. Besides carrying out tree-planting schemes this way, the prisoners are taught agriculture, dairying, and the care of stock. In justifying this policy, the Attorney-General explained the other day that the use of this labor for the preparation of fruit and dairy farms for sale to small settlers eventually would not take employment from free citizens. An extension of the scheme is to be made in different sections. It is not proposed to sell the fruit or products, but merely to supply the prisons, and to sell the farms when in profit to settlers. At present, 200 farms of 50 acres each are being established.

It has been proved in Victoria that the spores