

country by giving rewards of merit to the successful competitors at their exhibitions. But I think very much more might be done if our agricultural societies, instead of making special classes for imported stock or for stock owned in a certain district, would award prizes to animals bred by the exhibitors. It would be a recognition of their skill and ability as breeders; it would give more prestige to the character of their herds and flocks; it would also show what could be accomplished in our own country.

Now the next, and by far the largest class of sheep-husbandmen, includes those who breed and feed for mutton and for wool. This requires less capital, is attended with less risk, makes quicker returns, and the ordinary farmer in this branch of the business is more certain of success. This only requires a limited knowledge that may soon be picked up by observation and experience, although a certain amount of knowledge is necessary to insure success; and much will depend on the quality and character of the flock to begin with. Some sheep, like some land, are so poor, it would be impossible to make a profit on breeding and feeding them. It is not necessary they should be of any pure breed but might be such as the best of the common sheep of our country, no better, perhaps, than may be seen in many sections grazing on the public highways. Such sheep can be got at a reasonable figure, and with such a flock of breeding ewes to start with there need be no fear of the result, if properly managed.

The next and most important step is to make sure of a first-class ram, for the ram is one half the flock as regards breeding, and should possess superior individual merit. And that there may be no mistake on this point, the safer way is to go direct to some well-established, reliable breeder of pure-bred sheep; for a few dollars extra spent for a good ram is soon returned.

And I would say, by all means get one of the Down type. Some would favor the Shropshire, others the Hampshire, and another the Southdown. Well, either of these will do, provided he is a good sheep of his kind. But I would certainly take the latter, and continue from year to year with the same breed, and there need be no fear of the result, which would be the best quality of wool and mutton that could be produced from cross-bred sheep, and the time has now come, even in this country, when a higher price is being paid for a fine quality of mutton than for the coarser sorts.

SUPERIORITY OF THE SOUTHDOWNS.

As a proof that the Southdown will give the best results, we may mention in a carefully conducted experiment at the Government Farm, Guelph, extending over a period of five years, with the grades of all the leading breeds of sheep, all being fed and managed alike, the Southdown grade gave the largest profit per head, the Shropshire coming next. The Southdown gave a profit of \$6.60 per head at one year old, or 110 per cent. profit on the outlay. The Shropshire gave a net profit at the same age of \$6.32 per head, or 91 per cent. on the outlay. And as all of our sheep are of the English breeds and our mutton market is regulated by the price paid in that country, we would do well to look to Britain for lessons on the subject. And from the official reports of the Smithfield Club Fat Stock Shows for a number of years, we find the Southdowns keeping to the front, and when put in competition with all other breeds have won more champion prizes than all the rest put together; and the London market reports at the present time quotes Southdown mutton 1½ cents per lb. higher than any other.

MANAGEMENT.

The next important matter to consider is their management. There is an erroneous idea entertained by some that sheep will run out; that is, the same flock cannot be kept on the same farm for any great length of time, but must be renewed or changed every few years. Abundant proof can be produced showing the absurdity of such a theory. The flock can not only be kept up, but may be improved from year to year by weeding out the poorer and older sheep, and filling their places with the choicest of the ewe lambs each year.

It is necessary in this country to provide sufficient shelter for the flock, although it need not be an expensive structure; must be well ventilated. A dry ground floor is all that is needed below.

I would recommend the system of numbering sheep in the ear, also with paint on the wool after shearing; this enables a shepherd to become familiar with the individual character of each sheep and to make notes of the same, for without some knowledge of this kind a great mistake may be made when it comes to the weeding out process. It often happens that ewes raising the best lambs will not look as well as those that raised the poorest, or perhaps none at all.

A good plan for weeding the flock is to commence a year in advance, taking out the older and faulty ewes, and perhaps a number of others, and couple them with the ram as early as possible. There is always a good demand for extra good early lambs. The balance of the flock could be served so as to drop their lambs in April or May, but would prefer April, while they are still housed; they can be better attended to and are less liable to losses.

To insure a good crop of lambs, ewes should have at least two weeks good fresh pasture before being coupled with the ram, and should not be forced to pick their living to late in the fall, but as soon as pasture is scant or in cold storms, they should be allowed shelter and a feed of good clover hay; and when taken into winter quarters, should have a roomy yard to run into at will, with a constant supply of good water.

WINTER FEED.

Sheep may be fed once a day with any kind of good straw, pea-straw being the best; but the principal food should be well-cured green-cut clover hay; and if fed in properly constructed racks, and only in such quantities as they will eat up clean before the next feed, there need be no waste. To feed twice a day in the short winter days is better than oftener, and good clover hay is all that breeding ewes require until near lambing season, when a little grain, oats, peas, or barley, mixed with bran, should be given, increasing the feed as the lambs grow older, either having a separate place for the lambs to go into and feed or by giving them plenty of room to feed with the ewes, and in this way the draught ewes and their lambs can be disposed of to good advantage. Lambs that are being fed through the winter for the spring market, should be either ewe or wether lambs; there can be no profit in feeding ram lambs. And in addition to good hay and straw, should have a daily allowance of say, half a pound, and may be increased to a pound, of grain and bran; and if supplemented with a few roots of any kind, all the better, and should make a gain of from 8 to 10 lbs. per month, and may be sold off to make room for the young lambs in spring. Ewes and lambs should be fed inside until grass gets a good start. It is a mistake to think sheep won't do well on long pasture, although they may do well on short, if thick and fresh; but if let on when too short it is likely to be too short all summer. They should only be let

out part of the day at first, and the grain feed continued for a short time after the hay is stopped, that the change from dry to green feed may be gradual.

All ram lambs not sold for the early spring market should be made wethers of. The annual loss to Canadian sheep-farmers from neglect of this matter alone is very considerable, and would more than supply them with first-class rams.

SUMMER MANAGEMENT.

As to their care and management in summer, they require comparatively little attention in this country, and farmers usually have plenty of other things to look after; but the flock should be seen daily to see that all is right; neglect in this often entails loss, by one getting cast or otherwise. What they want now is a good run of pasture with plenty of shade, salt, and water to go to at will.

A small piece of corn or other crop may be sown for green feed, if pasture fails from drouth or other causes, and if not required, may be cut and cured for winter use. About the first of August the lambs should be weaned, care being taken to milk the ewes a few times and see that their udders are all right, taking stock of any found defective in that respect.

One thing particularly in favor of sheep-farming is, that the labor of attending to them is light, no small consideration in this country where labor is high and land comparatively cheap. The only time they require very close attention is during the lambing season, and neglect then often means serious loss. But with proper care the crop is more certain, and the market value thereof varies less than that of wheat, fruit, and other agricultural products.

Another consideration in their favor is, that they can be fenced against, either by stationary fence or movable hurdles, at less cost than other stock. And last, if not least, they produce two crops a year, and some even three in this northern latitude.

Our Scotch Letter.

ABORTION, FARMERS' DIFFICULTIES, WAGES, SALES.

(From our Aberdeenshire Correspondent.)

Scotch breeders have had too much reason, unfortunately, of late, to take an interest in the discussion of the question of abortion in cows. It was so prevalent in Scotland that the Highland and Agricultural Society have entered upon an investigation of the subject. In the recently issued volume of the Society's "transactions," appears the first report of the committee to whom the subject was remitted, and though the report is of a negative character, it contains not a little that is of importance to breeders, and I will give a short summary for your readers' benefit. The reporters are Dr. G. Sims, Prof. McFadyen and Dr. A. P. Aitken. The answers they have received to a string of some twenty-five queries, approved by the Veterinary committee of the Society, disclose the fact that the disease is not only of a wide-spread, but of an aggravated nature, and not confined to any particular breed of cattle, or any particular district of the country. Where herds have been attacked the number of cows that have aborted have been from 30 per cent. to as much as 80 per cent.

The facts negative any theory that would ascribe abortion to geological or climatic conditions. The animals are liable to abortion at all ages and at all stages, but they most frequently "slip" from the sixth to the eighth month. There is a belief that is probably well founded, that a cow that has once aborted is more liable than others to abort in future years but still in many cases such cows are found to carry their calves to the full term in after years.

Among the theories advanced to account for the prevalence of abortion (leaving out of account such causes as mechanical injury and fright,) are, 1, constitutional taint; 2, errors of diet; 3, ergoted grasses; 4, sympathy; 5, contagion (a specific germ). That abortion is ascribable to any such general, or widely acting influence, as domestication, or to the existence of tuberculosis, has not been borne out by