

The Farm.

Sheep Eating Weeds.

"The American Sheep Breeder" points out the fact that many plants usually classed as weeds are in pastures often eaten by sheep, either to give variety to their diet or for the tonic effect on their systems. It mentions the common dandelion, parsley, yarrow, and even thoroughwort, as desirable for this purpose. In England sheep-growers purposely sow yarrow when laying down pastures for sheep, and also the narrow-leaved plantain. Most of these are somewhat bitter to the taste, and the liking for what is bitter seems to be a peculiarity of the sheep, which often leads it to eat leaves that are poisonous rather than medicinal. It is possible that all these plants have medicinal qualities, but the sheep does not know enough to doctor itself with them, as sheep are often poisoned by eating leaves of laurel when allowed to run where that poisonous plant grows. We have known sheep to be poisoned when an overdose of cherry leaves was probably the cause. The leaves of the cherry, peach, almond and of the common oleander all contain prussic acid, and are all poisonous when eaten in any quantity.

It is chiefly, we think, when pastures are dried up, and the sheeps' appetites are clamorous for some green thing, that these fresh leaves are most attractive to them. Yet we should hate to leave even dried leaves of the cherry, almond or peach where sheep could eat all they liked of them. The craving for something bitter probably explains why sheep will eat the tender shoots of nearly all deciduous trees, which are almost invariably bitter to the palate. With regard to anything uncleanly as regards animal excrement or blood, the taste of the sheep is more refined and sensitive than that of any other farm animal. But it unquestionably does have a liking for what is bitter to the taste, and will eat the small, wormy apples that a hog will turn up his nose at, while the hog will pick its favorite food among filth that no sheep could be brought near enough to touch. In the early summer, while the small, bitter, wormy apples are falling, the sheep is, therefore, a much better scavenger in the orchard than the hog.—(American Cultivator.)

Milking Cows at Noon.

One of the Boston daily papers had a short paragraph lately about a cow which John Milton, of Gardiner, Me., is obliged to milk three times a day, and which recently gave in one day 3 1/4 quarts of milk at three milkings. There are many cows all over the country which through this month at least need for their comfort to be milked three times per day. Cows at pasture do much better if left in the field at night, or turned to pasture early in the morning, both in June and July at least. In the hottest weather there is generally a lowering of temperature at night, and the cow will graze then, and be ready to lie down under a tree or under an open shed in the pasture lot through the day. She is really making milk faster while chewing her cud and digesting her food than while on her feet grazing.

If the twenty-four hours of the day are divided into eight-hour sections, the middle of the day yield of milk will be larger than either of the others. But if she be a good cow, one which turns most of her food to milk, this three-times-a-day milking will cause her to grow thin in flesh unless she has a grain ration at noon. A cow on June pasture, milked only twice a day, will not eat grain. But if she is milked three times daily she will eat a noon feed of grain, and be all the better for it. By July the grain ration may be lessened, and some clover, partly cured, may be substituted. So soon as clover heads out it becomes very rich in nutrition, and if partly cured it is less likely to cause bloating from eating too much, as freshly cut clover might do. When clover is cut for soiling stock there is much less danger from bloat, because they cannot go through it and pick off the blossoms only, as they do when they are turned into clover in blossom to graze.—(American Cultivator.)

The Influence of Manures.

Continuing his investigation of the relative influences of manures on the feeding properties of crops, Dr. Somerville, of the Durham College of Science, last winter fed sheep on turnips, oats and hay grown expressly for the purpose with the aid of different manures separately and in combination. The experiment, it will be remembered, commenced on pasture land, and with the object of broadening its scope and rendering it additionally reliable it was decided that for the second trial ordinary rotation crops should be utilized. Instead of being grazed, therefore, the experimental lots of sheep in the latter case were penned in an airy shed and had the allotted materials served them in the ordinary manner of hand-feeding. As indicated, yellow turnips, oats and hay were the articles employed, and the food for each lot of sheep was produced by the aid of a certain manurial dressing.

The relative progress of the different lots, as measured by their gain in live weight, seemed to leave little room for doubt as to the unequal effects which the various substances exert on the quality of the crops. The food which produced the largest increase of live weight per given quantity was that grown with the aid of bone meal. Superphosphate alone came next, the return being slightly less when a moderate amount of sulphate of ammonia or nitrate of soda was added, and smaller still when the dressing nitrogenous manure was doubled. Though the nitrogen had the apparent effect of depressing the nutritive properties of the crops, however, this result was more than atoned for by the larger yield of crop produced. The indicated superiority of the bone meal foods was not sufficient to compensate for the small yields. Quantity and quality of crop both considered, superphosphate, nitrate of soda and kainit formed the most effectual manure.—(London Post.)

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The following is Mr. Archibald's letter: