

## SHEEP AND SWINE.

## FEEDING YOUNG PIGS.

A correspondent, writing to the *Breeder's Gazette*, says: In the problem of feeding there are so many unknown quantities that the majority of feeders of pigs go by guess. In the absence of a thorough knowledge of the feeding values of the articles used for feed, it is not strange that we find many amusing prejudices among raisers. It is a fact, however, that many of our most successful feeders and breeders know little about the chemical constituents of the feed they use, or of the formulas arrived at by science in arranging a perfect ration for pig, horse or steer.

Not one housewife in a thousand of the many good bread-makers can give any reason for the action of the yeast on the dough, and, perhaps, never heard of carbonic acid gas, and, surely, never thought of the part it plays in making the bread light. Like Widow Bedotte, these feeders of pigs and makers of bread go by their judgment, and none can be successful at feeding pigs or making bread who have not what an old lady calls "good judgmental sense."

An Irish neighbour, speaking of his success at pig feeding, said, "A man must look at his pig frequently. Yes, no pig will do well unless you look at him frequently." A rushing, busy neighbour, who never took time even to count his pigs, but pitched them their corn and hastened away to his work, was always complaining of his bad luck with his pigs. His next neighbour, however, had fine success. When he went to feed he first saw that the trough and feeding-floor were clean, and then looked over his pigs to see if they were all there. If one or more were missing, he spared no time in seeing what the matter was and where they were. The laggards found, and his pigs all at the table, he put in the slop, always careful that it was not too sour or that it varied little from what he usually fed; and he then enjoyed seeing how every pig pitched in for its share. When they were called for the corn he had time to get in among them and spread the corn out so all could get it readily, without crowding and fighting for it. He even had time to rub the backs of a few favourites, and to stand and look at them eat. His neighbour, commenting on his laziness, said, "B. would hang on the fence a half-hour looking at his pigs eat; and he did this three times a day, yet he always has good luck with his pigs, and I know he don't feed so much as I do."

This circumstance illustrates about the same principle in the Irishman's plan of "looking at them frequently." The successful feeder likes to feed, likes to see them eat, and likes to keep things in order about the pens and feeding-floor, that the pigs may enjoy what they eat; and when that is eaten he loves to see them find comfort in cool shade, or to bathe in a clean stream, if he can have it so. Like a great hog raiser, who is most successful in raising, feeding and selling pigs, and has a choice boar's quarters in the corner of a nice ten-acre meadow. "Well," said the writer to him, "Won't that hog damage a great deal of grass?" He replied, "Oh, yes, he may muss it up a little; but there is nothing too good for a hog." He wanted that hog to do without grain; yet he wanted him to keep up in flesh, as his customers saw him whenever they came to the farm to look at his fine pigs. The old farmer felt the hog would pay him for all the grass he damaged. His pigs would be the better the next season, and his fine glossy coat would commend his get to every buyer.

In this case the successful man was securing comfort and abundance of the very best feed for that much-prized boar. Good care and good feed are essential to best success in handling pigs.

Generous feeders are not always wise in the rations furnished. Some overdo the business, and by lavishly feeding young things with only fat-forming feed, as if fattening for the butcher, get the pigs out of condition, and fit subjects for disease. Unless the pigs thus fed are disposed of at an early age, they will likely go back or get out of condition when they are exposed to some unavoidable extreme of heat or cold, or drouth or rain. Once set back, it is almost impossible to bring such pigs or calves back to profitable growth. Had the young things been fed more than mere fat forming feed, and bone and fibre had developed in keeping with the fat put on, vigour and health had been established so that they would have passed through the tax imposed by change of weather and rallied at once, or not have shown any check in growth.

## SHROPSHIREDOWN SHEEP.

Comparatively little is known in America of the Shropshire-down sheep. They have been justly styled the "sturdy champions of the medium class." The old favourite, Southdown, has had the monopoly as a mutton sheep, but must divide the honour with the Shropshires. They are not so large as the Oxforddowns, but carry a finer fleece, and are superior as a mutton sheep: indeed, it is asserted that the quality of their mutton is equal to that of the Southdown. The Shropshire-downs are now the popular sheep in England and Scotland, and are becoming quite popular in Canada. They are hardy and prolific, and we find them to be extra good nurses. The average weight of a flock of breeding ewes will be from 140 to 160 pounds, and in good condition should weigh 200 pounds, more or less. Aged rams will weigh 250 to 300 pounds in good condition. A flock of store and breeding ewes will shear from six to eight pounds of wool. The fleece is close and the wool fine, and from five to six inches long. Some say that the fleeces are heavier, but we seldom obtain over eight pounds, except it is from a well-fed dry ewe, or a ram.

The true Shropshire should have prominent hazel eyes, rather thick, short faces, hollow in the forehead, and broad between the ears. Dark brown faces and legs are preferred as a matter of fancy, though black or even mottled faces do not indicate impurity of blood. We added to our flock this season a pair of shearling ewes, which took first prize at Norwalk, England, last fall, and their faces are very dark, almost black, and they have black legs. Longevity is a marked characteristic of the breed. We find them much hardier than the long-wooled sheep which we have bred for many years, and the crop of lambs has been at least forty per cent. better, all having the same feed and care. This breed of sheep has spread throughout Great Britain very rapidly within the last ten years. They prove valuable to cross on the white-faced ewes, improving the quality of both wool and mutton.

## THE CHEAPEST TIME TO MAKE PORK.

R. F. asks if a full diet of grass in summer and a full diet of grain in the winter is not the cheapest plan for making pork. This, he thinks, would cost very little in summer, and the chief expense would come in winter.

The chief mistake in this idea which is very prevalent is, that it gives a period of comparatively slow growth, at the very time when the growth should be the most rapid. Grass is a very important food for pigs, and should always be given them in the season; but to let the pig live wholly upon grass is to put it back to the old slow-going condition of nature in the most favourable season for rapid growth. The skilful

feeder should make the best use of his opportunities, and when the temperature is mild it takes so much less food to generate animal heat, and the extra food will produce so much more gain than in cold weather, that every consideration of economy requires that some concentrated food should be given in addition to the grass. The only really profitable pig-feeding requires judicious full-feeding from birth till time of slaughter. One hundred pounds of grain, fed in summer on grass, will produce as much gain as two hundred pounds fed in winter. All this difference is made up in temperature. Pigs do not require heavy feeding in summer to produce a larger gain than they can make in cold weather. A half ration of grain is quite sufficient in summer, and this smaller grain ration will pay twice the profit, according to quantity of that fed in winter.

It would thus appear that with a full ration of grass should be given grain enough to produce rapid gain through the summer, and thus will require much less feeding in winter to reach the same weight. The cheapest way to make pork is to feed full every day of the pig's life until sold. It is very expensive holding pigs with slow growth in the most favourable season—the summer—and then making it up in the most expensive season—the winter.—*National Live Stock Journal, Chicago.*

## TAGGING SHEEP.

The attention that sheep get when their products are high is thought by many to be labour thrown away when such products are low. This is wrong. The lower the price, the greater the necessity for placing a good article before the market. I have found tagging the sheep at this time of the year a paying operation. I tag all of them. Tags taken in February and March sell for more than half price. Taken after the sheep have been on grass, they won't sell for anything. Taken off now there will be quite an equal clip as if left on, as the sheep will do enough better to add that much to the weight of the wool. Two hands can make light work of it. My plan is to turn a box, or make a platform, about two and one-half inches high, and large enough for one sheep to lie on. Lay the sheep on its back, and let one hand hold the hind legs, while the other shears where the manure would collect, and the bags of the ewes, and a little from the belly of the wethers. Ewes with lamb must be handled carefully; and all sheep ought to be. In a full-blood Merino flock I find it sometimes necessary to shear around the eyes of the ewes to enable them to see their lambs. Neglecting this tagging job often leads to serious results. Worms will get on to many of them before shearing time, and in large flocks I have known many lost.—*Rural World.*

## A WIRE FENCE FOR SHEEP.

The difficulty of making a barbed-wire fence to confine sheep is well known. They will crowd through small openings, if they have to leave their wool on the barbs. The following successful experiment was performed on a large sheep and cattle farm: The fence was first made of three barbed wires placed about the usual distance, with a ridge of earth banked up a foot high or more as a visible barrier. But the sheep were not deterred by this insufficient fence, and they crowded through between the two lower wires. Two common, smooth and cheap wires were then added, by placing one on each side of the lower barbed wire. These smooth wires, although insufficient of themselves to check the animals, operated by crowding their heads against the neighbouring barbs, and the attempt to pass became fruitless.