

FARMING

VOL. XV.

JULY 26th, 1898.

No. 47

FARMING

AN ILLUSTRATED WEEKLY JOURNAL DEVOTED TO FARMING AND THE FARMER'S INTERESTS.

Published every Tuesday by

THE BRYANT PRESS,

44-46 RICHMOND STREET WEST TORONTO, CANADA

Subscriptions in Canada and the United States \$1.00 per year, in advance; six months 50 cents, three months 25 cents. In all countries in the Postal Union, \$1.50 a year in advance.

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TOPICS FOR THE WEEK

Agricultural News and Comments.

The toad is beneficial to the farmer and gardener. Eleven per cent. of its food is composed of insects and spiders, beneficial or indirectly helpful to man, and eighty per cent. of insects and other animals directly injurious to cultivated crops, or in other ways obnoxious to man. The enemies of the toad are hawks, owls and, worst of all, small boys, who stone and kill many of them. There have been excellent laws enacted to protect insectivorous birds. Why should there not be as stringent legislation against the destruction of toads?

There will be three great farm exhibits at the Omaha Exposition. The first will be the model two-acre farm illustrating the Campbell system of soil culture, to which reference was made in these columns a few weeks ago. Then there will be an eighty-acre tract of land devoted to demonstrations of different methods of irrigation—perhaps the most elaborate exhibit ever attempted. The third will be an exhibit in forestry, conducted by the U.S. Government. These three exhibits, if properly conducted, will be of great value to the Western farmers.

Mr. H. B. Gurler, of Illinois, who attended the Western Dairymen's meeting at London last January, says that he cannot afford to keep a cow that does not produce above 200 pounds of butter a year. He puts it this way: Feed, \$30; care, \$10; interest, \$2 50; total, \$42 50. Deduct \$10 for skim milk and we have \$32 50. This will require 203 pounds of butter at 16 cents per pound before profit begins. How many farmers get an average of 200 pounds of butter from their cows and get 16 cents per pound for the butter they make?

In 1897 32,520,076 acres of land were under crop and grass in Great Britain. Nearly 200,000 more acres of wheat were grown in 1897 than in 1896, but there were decreases in the amount of barley, oats, beans and peas. The total number of cattle was practically the same as in 1896, namely, 6½ million head. The total sheep in 1897 numbered 26,340,000, as compared with 26,705,000 in 1896, whilst the total pigs in 1897 amounted to 2,342,000, as against 2,878,000 in 1896.

It is estimated that there are 11,000,000 cows in the United States devoted to butter-making, and that their average yield is 125 pounds of butter a year, or a total of 1,375,000,000 pounds, or about eighteen pounds for each one of the population of the United States. It is estimated that the normal consumption of butter in the family, that the means of supplying its wants and gratifying its tastes, is fifty pounds a year for each member. If this estimate is correct, it will require a large percentage over the present production to supply the home demand alone. These figures emphasize the fact that it is not over production of dairy products which the American has to fear, but that there is an enormously restricted consumptive ability which makes prices unsatisfactory.

Argentina is improving the quality of her flocks by the introduction of pure bred rams from Europe. In 1888 Argentine exported no first class wool, and 11,000,000 pounds of third class, valued at \$1,178,000; in 1897 the exports were 20,000,000 pounds of first class wool, valued at \$3,000,000, and 14,000,000 pounds of third class. The Argentine Republic is a country of about one third the area of the United States, and produces on an average one third more wool than the latter country.

Breeders and dealers say that high class horses are as high now as they have ever been because of their scarcity. The American Government pays \$125 for cavalry and artillery horses, and exporters pay about the same price. Choice to fancy coachers and drivers sell in the United States for \$200 to \$500 and extra drafters up to \$300, but common, small horses are cheaper than ever before. Thus, while the poorer horses are cheaper than ever before, the horse of superior quality commands a high price. Breed good horses and the price will be good.

The results of the examinations in the first and second years at the Ontario Agricultural College have been published. Twenty six candidates succeeded in passing the first year's examination and thirty the second year, making a total of fifty six in all. The college has had a very successful year, and will enter upon the season of 1898-99 better equipped than ever to give a thoroughly practical training in agriculture.

A subscriber from Lambton County, who called at the office last week, reports the crops in that section as being very good. The fall wheat is all harvested, and some early varieties of oats will be cut this week. The country, as a whole, needs rain; in fact, in the district west of London there has been a scarcity of rain for several weeks past. Even during harvest a good shower or two every week does no harm, and will freshen the root crops immensely.

All animals suffer from flies, and some of them very severely. All domestic animals should be protected against these pests. At bottom most of the remedies for flies consist of grease or oil of some kind. An American exchange recommends train oil, three quarts, crude petroleum, one quart, and carbolic acid, one ounce, for protecting cattle. These, if mixed and applied with a sponge, will keep cattle fairly free from flies for about a week, when the application must be renewed.

British Letter.

AGRICULTURE AT THE PARIS EXPOSITION IN 1900 — THE ROYAL SHOW AT BIRMINGHAM.

(From Our Special Correspondent.)

London, Eng., July 11th, 1898

I have just received an early copy of the regulations, etc., under which British and Colonial goods will be exhibited at the Paris Exhibition of 1900. This exhibition is of quite as great importance to the colonies and dependencies of Great Britain as it is to Great Britain itself, and in giving my readers a few particulars in regard to it they have the very earliest possible reliable information.

So far as Great Britain and her colonies are concerned their action is to be regulated by a Royal Commission, and I am pleased to see that, so far as Canada is dealt with, the Dominion is represented on the commission by, to use official phraseology, "Our right trusty and well beloved Donald Alexander, Baron Strathcona and Mount Royal, Knight Grand Cross of Our Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, High Commissioner in London for Our Dominion of Canada." Agriculture will be found at the exhibition in what is designated "group 7," and this group is to consist of "classes 35 to 42," in which may be shown (a) implements and processes used in rural cultivation; (b) appliances and processes used in vine culture; (c) ditto used in agricultural industries; (d) agronomy (theory of agriculture), agricultural statistics; (e) vegetable food products; (f) animal food products; (g) non edible agricultural products; and (h) useful insects and their products, and destructive insects and parasitic plants.

Concerning "horticulture and arboriculture" group 8 will be set apart for these, and in this group there will be six classes, for (1) appliances and processes used in horticulture and arboriculture; (2) kitchen garden plants; (3) fruit and fruit trees; (4) trees, shrubs, ornamental plants and flowers; (5) greenhouse and hothouse plants; (6) horticultural and nursery seeds and stock.

In group 9, to which it is not necessary perhaps to more than merely allude, will be devoted six classes for matters connected with "Forests, sport, fishing, gathering wild crops." Those desiring fuller details as to the exhibition will be able to obtain them, I assume, from the Dominion authorities either now or very shortly. At any rate, the foregoing will give a general idea what the exhibition is to consist of from the agriculturist's and horticulturist's point of view. I will only further add that in the class (f) for animal food products exhibitors will be enabled to show "(1) edible fatty substances and oils, (2) fresh or preserved milk, (3) fresh, salt, or highly salt butter, (4) cheese, (5) eggs." It seems to me that this is an opportunity which should not be lost by the Canadian farmer—either individually or through the Government—to show his butter and cheese; for it must not be forgotten that, although a large market may not be possible in France, buyers from all countries will be at the exhibition and not least from Great Britain itself. Much business is sometimes done during the excitement and enthusiasm of an ordinary agricultural show. Much more may be expected at Paris in 1900.

Readers will doubtless be aware by this time that our great annual agricultural exhibition, viz.,