

ultimately affect the market and induce and maintain lower values in all grades. The selling of these kind of hogs at this time can be attributed neither to a scarcity in the food supply nor to over-production. There is plenty of feed in the country and the supply of hogs was never more limited than now. The general practice among farmers of feeding as few hogs as possible during the winter is the principle cause of the large number of this class of hogs now coming forward. While winter feeding has disadvantages, while it costs more, pound for pound, to produce pork at this season than it does in the summer winter, hog feeding possesses advantages enough to commend for it more consideration than it ordinarily receives. The hog business is going to become one of the most profitable side lines of agriculture in the West. We shall always have abundance of stuff for feeding purposes, we shall always be able to secure a fair price for our product, providing such product conforms to what the market requires. For this reason it is a mistake to run too many light hogs to market. While the trade can consume a small proportion of this kind, an over run has the effect of lowering values all around. There is hardly a farmer selling light stuff at present who could not just as well hold his hogs over for two weeks or a month and thus bring them nearer the required weight for first grades. It would pay him to do so and would help the bacon hog industry of the West.

Should I be a Mixed Farmer?

EDITOR FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

I have now been a reader of your valuable and instructive paper for nearly three years and have noticed frequent editorial articles on mixed farming and on the cattle embargo in Great Britain.

I am a farmer and a mixed farmer as far as I am able, but if the embargo is removed I must go back to wheat, and wheat alone.

These articles of yours advocate widely different and antagonistic practices. You advise me as a farmer to feed stock and thus improve the fertility of my land and incidentally to turn all waste products, such as screenings, straw, etc., into cash and manure.

To the breeder of stock you advise shipping young stock to Great Britain, there to be finished for the butcher. If it is profitable for the breeder to ship to England, then it will not pay me to buy feeders, as I cannot get the same price for the finished article as the British feeder.

Perhaps you will say I should breed my own feeders. Well and good; suppose I start breeding and the animals are two years old. If the embargo is removed it would pay me better to ship them as stockers to England than to feed them myself. If it would not be more profitable to dispose of them that way, then the embargo is no obstruction to the Canadian farmer. To improve my farm materially I must have dung from fattening cattle. Dung from milk cows and young stuff is of comparatively little use. Surely it is better to keep stock in this country to be finished. What are we going to do with our screenings, frozen wheat, alfalfa, clover, etc., etc., if there is nothing to feed them to.

A two-year-old Canadian steer would fetch about \$40.00 on the English market. After deducting cost of transportation, commissions, etc., what is there left? About \$15.00. I fail to see where the breeder will benefit.

I sum up the situation as follows:—Remove the embargo and the Canadian breeder will not benefit, the English, Irish and Scotch breeders will lose, the English feeder will benefit a little and the Canadian farmer must make up his mind to grow wheat and nothing else, run his farm and retire in old age to a country where they have work-houses. We will have to continue burning our straw to waste, and in seasons like the present, not be able to sell our grain.

Mixed farming will be done by those farmers who be more than ever at the mercy of speculators and the vagaries of the market.

If I am wrong I should like to know my ideas are wrong, but I think it is a mistake to let us go in for mixed farming, and that we should thus not be at the mercy of speculators and the vagaries of the market.

Alta.

[In expressing the opinion that the "removal of the embargo would be a boon to the Canadian cattle industry" we had a situation in mind something like this: Canadian cattle three and four years old are going to British markets directly off grass here, and have to be slaughtered at port of entry. Now it is evident that if these cattle could be fed a while and given a chance to gain some of the flesh lost on the voyage they would be worth more as feeders than as butcher's cattle, especially as cattle make rapid gains after a sea voyage and upon British grain and turnips. Such an arrangement we do not think would tend to attract young steers from Canada, on account of the proportionately higher freight rate for light cattle and the longer time they would have to be kept in British yards or pastures. The short-keep steer is the animal the British feeder can handle best.

The conjecture, however, of the embargo removal need never deter anyone engaging in a course that would be upset by such an occurrence. The Old Country cattle raisers will manage to keep the embargo and Canadian farmers will have the young stuff to feed. With this explanation our statements in previous issues should not appear "antagonistic."—ED.]

Fall Calves.

Where cattle are reared under natural conditions, the rule that the young be dropped in the spring will continue, but this practice is not necessarily the most successful in the older sections of the country. Fall calves come at a time when the little attentions they need can be readily given, and they occupy but little space in the barn or shed. Subsisting on the mother's milk or on skim milk with a little grain and hay, when spring comes the youngsters are large enough to make the best use of the pastures, and the result is progress from the start. Next fall on their return to winter quarters they are old enough and strong enough in digestion to make good use of the dry provender necessitated by winter conditions.

Wintering the Sows.

It is a mistake to confine sows too closely in winter. It is an equally great mistake to domicile them on the dunghill. A combination of the two extremes whereby the sows may be allowed the maximum of liberty and exercise and at the same time have warm, dry sleeping quarters and shelter during severe weather is all that is required to bring them through the winter. Such a place can easily be arranged. On the sheltered side of the barn yard set up a pole structure. It may be square or preferably wigwam shaped, throw a load or two of straw over the poles covering them to a depth of several feet. The hogs will burrow into the straw pile and arrange quarters for themselves within the pole enclosure and no further attention need be given to the shelter. Such a place is warm, dry, free from draughts, ventilates itself naturally through the straw covering and conditions are almost ideal for the best results.

Provision should be made for forcing the sows to exercise. If fed too close to their straw "dug-out," they will simply devour the food and crawl back to shelter. A good scheme to outwit them in this respect is to have the feeding place fifty yards or so from the sleeping place. They are then forced to take exercise in walking backwards and forwards between the pen and the feeding place. A pen thus described may be made to accommodate any number of sows though it is better as a rule not to have more than five or six sows together.

Bull Management in Winter.

In winter, if possible, the bull should be allowed to exercise in an open yard sheltered on one side to protect from storms. If the bull is young and immature, exercise of some sort is absolutely essential, he requires air and sunshine in addition to his food in order that he may be able to build up a framework and establish a constitution that will not leave him old at four or five years, as we have come to think bulls to be. There is no reason why bulls if properly managed during their years of growth and judiciously cared for after reaching maturity should not be used for twice this length of time. It is sometimes necessary in the case of old bulls to confine them in a shed or stable during the greater part of the time both winter and summer. Bulls thus

confined should have a liberal allowance of green feed, which will alleviate to some extent the hardship of continued confinement. If required to be kept inside all the time a box stall is an absolute necessity. No bull can maintain his constitutional vigor, keep his system toned up in the best form for making use of his feed, or for any length of time continue in usefulness, if kept tied up by the neck day after day, getting exercise only when led out to service. There are more bulls ruined for want of exercise than in any other way. Let them out in the fresh air and sunshine if possible, if not provide a good sized box for them to move about in inside.

FARM

Fixing the Price of Wheat.

The price of wheat during the past month has been fluctuating within rather wide limits. At one time during the early part of October cask wheat was worth a dollar fifteen per bushel, at about the same date in November it was selling around ninety-five. While a good portion of this difference may be set down to the handicap in trade induced by the financial stringency, there is nevertheless an element that enters into the fixing of values in such commodities as wheat that was unknown, or at least not touched upon by early teachers of economics when they laid down the basic principles of that science, and taught that supply and demand were the only factors concerned in determining the selling price of commodities. Normally, values are established and maintained in this way, the amount of surplus over domestic consumption and the ability of the consumer to purchase supplies being the controlling elements in fixing prices; but the wheat market is always in an abnormal condition. The grain exchanges in every primary market establish the price of wheat by selling it in the open to the highest bidder. What wheat, oats, or any other agricultural commodity sells for in these market exchanges fixes the price for all the surplus of that commodity in the country, and that price would be controlled largely by the supply of the commodity available and the purchasing ability of the consumers, did not the wild scramble between the bulls and the bears of the trade lift values to a higher level or depress them to a lower range. If this element of speculation were, or could be eliminated from the market exchanges, and men prevented from selling what they do not have to other men who do not want the commodity which they buy, and the exchanges restricted to trading in real instead of imaginary deliveries, the transactions would establish an equitable price as between the producer and the consumer, and free competition between buyers and sellers would establish prices for the surplus of all commercial articles not under monopolistic control.

But wheat is essentially a speculation commodity and speculators have more to do in fixing its prices than the men who produce it, the men who handle it or the consumer who finally uses it. The farmers' profit is measured by the difference in the cost of production and the selling price. They cannot control prices, because to do so it would be necessary to pool all their interests into one commercial interest in which each individual would receive payment in ratio to the distribution of the whole. The handlers cannot control prices because in order to do so they would require an organization as world-wide as the wheat market itself, and experience has shown that even could such an organization be projected the people would not long suffer any monopolistic control of so essential a food necessity. Nor have the consumers much voice in fixing prices; in fact, with such commodities as wheat they have practically no control at all. Prices in wheat, therefore, are fixed by the amount of available surplus, by supply and demand, if you prefer to call it such, only in so far as that price fluctuates from year to year. The average difference which wheat is selling for this year in comparison with last year's figures represents the influence which the available supply of the commodity has in fixing values. The fluctuations that occur from day to day are due to imaginary trading by those who neither have nor want the stock they buy and sell, and so long as the law protects men in such trading they will continue the controlling element in fixing prices.