Scarcity of Good Beef Cattle.

To the Editor FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

Recently a number of stock dealers were discussing an article that appeared in the Christmas number of the FARMER'S ADVOCATE. Amongst the opinions expressed was that the very large decrease in the number of export cattle was due to the increased attention paid to dairy cattle.

Some say that the falling off of receipts is caused mainly by the degenerating tendency in cattle which has been observed for several years past, the farmers not having paid sufficient attention to improving the breed of beef cattle. Another opinion was that the export to the United States of light stock and feeding cattle that are considered not good enough for winter feeding was the cause. Were these kept and fed during the winter, and sold for export in the spring, it would have a tendency to improve the quality. This, we consider, would not touch the question, as the class referred to would never make even fairly good export cattle, and the majority are doubtless sold for the local butchers' trade in the States. On the Toronto market there has been for several months a steady demand for short-keep, well-bred feeders, and no supply. Farmers from the best winter feeding districts, such as Huron, Perth, Wellington, Peel, Dufferin, and South Ontario, are constantly on this market for the purpose of buying short-keep feeders, but rarely obtain what they desire, and complain that the considerable quantity of stockers shipped out to the American market has drained the country of this desirable class of young stock.

We are of opinion that this is not the real cause. Dairy farming is probably more profitable to the average farmer, and yields more quick returns. The breeding of this class of cattle is not considered so very important. A high standard of breeding is, in most instances, overlooked by the dairy farmer.

The next question is, how can the difficulty be remedied? What is needed is a more general use of good pure-bred bulls of the beef breeds, and more liberal feeding from calfhood, fitting the cattle for exportation at 2 to 2½ years old; and, if necessary, the importation of new blood to breed up our grades, as too many of them are now undersized, of undesirable shape, and stunted. The reply is, that importation does not pay. Quarantine regulations, tuberculine testing, etc., render the importation and distribution too expensive.

We chronicle the fact week by week of the large number of stockers going through to Buffalo. If these animals are useful to our cousins for feeding purposes, why should they not be to our own farmers? The answer comes that transportation is reasonable, food is more plentiful, coarse grains are cheaper, beef cattle of all grades are scarce, and prices rule high; and for these reasons alone can the business be made profitable in the States. We offer, as a possible remedy, the suggestion of the organization of Farmers' Clubs, for the purchase and keeping for local public use a standard bull of approved quality, and the relentless stamping out of the weedy scrub bull of the hedgerow back lot.

Toronto, Jan. 15. MARKET CORRESPONDENT.

How to Forecast the Weather.

The formula of popular weather signs which is most kindly treated by the official observers is that adopted by the Farmers' Club of the American Institute a number of years ago: 1. When the temperature falls suddenly, there is a storm forming south of you. 2. When the temperature rises suddenly, there is a storm forming north of you. 3. The wind always blows from a region of fair weather toward a region where a storm is forming. 4. Cirrus clouds (a form of clouds appearing like spreading wisps or locks of hair) always move from a region where a storm is in progress towards a region of fair weather. 5. Cumulus clouds (irregularly rounded heaps or masses, white above and darker below) always move from a region where a storm is forming. 6. When cirrus clouds are moving rapidly from the north to north-east, there will be rain within twenty-four hours, no matter how cold it is. 7. When cirrus clouds are moving rapidly from south to south-east, there will be a cold hailstorm on the morrow if it be in the summer, and if it be in the winter there will be a snowstorm. 8. The wind always blows in a circle around a storm, and when it blows from the north the heaviest rain is east of you; if it blows from the south the heaviest rain is west of you; if it blows from the east the heaviest rain is south. 9. The wind never blows unless snow or rain is falling within 1,000 miles of you. 10. Whenever heavy white frost occurs a storm is forming within 1,000 miles north or north-west of you. This is as far as popular weather prophecy has yet advanced.

Instructive and Entertaining.

I sincerely thank you for the very handsome copy of the Christmas FARMER'S ADVOCATE you so kindly sent me. It is the most attractive number of its kind I have ever seen, and you may well be proud of such a publication. The illustrations are splendid, and it is seldom one finds so much instructive and entertaining reading matter between the two covers of a journal devoted to farming. You certainly are to be congratulated.

With renewed thanks, LAURA ROSE.
Guelph Dairy School.

FARM.

How I Would Build a Cement Silo.

As I have been working in the cement trade for four years, and have been travelling agent and instructor for Battle's Thorold Cement Works for the last year, and am employed by them now, I take pleasure in giving to my fellow farmers some of my ideas why they should build a cement concrete silo in preference to a wooden one, and how to build it. Take one instance—the wooden silo at the Guelph Agricultural College, with its great blue oak plank for studding, only lasted five years, when they had to fix it over and put a new inside into it, and five years from that they tore it all down and built a concrete silo, and Mr. Rennie told us that a wooden silo was too expensive to build for the time it lasted. Now, a concrete silo, if it is rightly built, will last as long as man is on the face of the earth. I will now describe how to build a concrete silo, say 12 feet in diameter inside by 30 feet high: By all means build a silo with six corners, as you can build a lighter wall than if you were building a square silo. First dig a trench 20 inches wide and about 20 inches deep; fill this up with concrete and large stone; pound the cement well in around the stone, then put up your scantling or long poles flattened on one side; stake them firmly at the bottom, three at each corner—two on the outside and one on the inside; tack small strips across from one to the other to keep them in their places; go around each corner in this way, then tack a piece of lumber from corner to corner, and then they are ready for cutting your plank to fit; take a plank say 9 inches wide, cut it in two, say long enough to go from corner to corner, then lay two edges together and nail a piece across the back to keep them together; go around the silo with these planks, inside and outside; make wall of silo 14 inches at bottom and 8 inches at the top; make the batter on the outside; make the inside of your silo one inch smaller at the top than at the bottom, so that it will give the ensilage a chance to settle without pressing too much on the walls of

ROYAL STANDARD =23381=.

Four-year-old Shorthorn bull, first prize and champion at Calgary Exhibition, 1899.

OWNED BY W. D. SHATTUCK, DAVISBURG, ALBERTA.

silo. In setting up your uprights at corners make them 6 inches wider than you are going to have your wall, so you can have your plank and room for an inch wedge at back; set up plank; cut small piece of board 14 inches long, put between planks; put in your inch wedge between planks and uprights, then take gravel and cement (one of cement and five of clean, sharp gravel), mix well together, then wet it enough so it will stay in a ball when you take and squeeze it in your hand; now take it and put it in between the plank; take an old axe or a small stone hammer and pound it well down, at the same time laying in all the stone that you can, as long as you keep them back say 2 inches from the edges on either side; after you go around it once, knock out your wedges, take your plank back from part of wall first built, and lift up about 16 inches; knock in your wedges again, and then start to fill the next round; keep lifting your plank as you go around. I also build in iron bands around the silo every 4 feet. Any old buggy tire will do by cutting them long enough to go from corner to corner and hooking them at the end; then you can lay them in as you go around. These irons are to keep it from spreading. Three common wires twisted together will do. Now I would make a door, 2x3 feet, out of plank, and nail a 2x4 scantling at the back in the center of the frame to make this air-tight; set this in the wall about 2 feet from the bottom; then build to the top of door; then build about 2 feet all around; then put in another door. Go on in this way until you get to the top, and you will have a silo that will keep your ensilage sweet, and you will never have any fear of air getting in and spoiling your corn. As to cost of silo, I will give you as near as I can: It will take 50 barrels of cement; two men 14 days to build; also 4 men one day to raise uprights; also 35 yard of gravel and 5 yards of stone. Now you have a silo that will last, for there is no rot about it.

A. E. HODGERT.
Hay P. O., Ont.

A. P. STEVENSON, Nelson, Man.: "I am indeed much pleased with the Christmas number of the FARMER'S ADVOCATE." January 4th, 1900.

Harvesting Ice.

The time to harvest ice is when there is ice to harvest, and it would seem that if the winter continues to break up at short intervals, as it has done so far in the southern portions of Canada, the first opportunity to get clear, solid ice of medium thickness should not be allowed to slip by unimproved. It requires no argument to convince anyone, but especially dairy farmers, that there are great advantages in having a supply of ice at command during the heated season. Not only is it profitable as an aid to keeping milk and cream in best condition, but it affords a deal of comfort in making it possible to hold fresh meats, fruit, etc., without deterioration for a reasonable length of time. Whether it will pay or not to store a supply of ice, is more a question of nearness to a suitable body of water from which to secure it than the providing of a place to store the ice, as a cheap shed that will keep out the sun, rain and wind is all that is required in a storehouse. Provision must be allowed, however, for drainage, but that is easily secured ordinarily. We find throughout the country, many ice houses consisting simply of sheds of inch lumber, using 2 by 4 inch scantling for frame, constructed at the north side of the house or wood shed, or at the back of a driving-house. Occasionally a box stall apart from where stock are stabled is appropriated, and we have seen a corner of the wood shed binned off so as to answer the purposes of a suitable storage for ice.

In filling the house, the blocks of ice should be cut as nearly even as possible, a convenient size to handle, so that they will pack in close and leave but little space between. It is well to pack in broken ice between the rows, and if the filling is done on a cold day, by pouring water on the broken or champed ice between the rows the whole mass will freeze together, which is an aid in reducing the waste by melting during the season. Sawdust is perhaps the most generally used packing material, as where it can be secured it is convenient to handle and is a good nonconductor. It is well, after providing for good drainage, to cover the floor of the house, which should be earth, with several inches of sawdust. This will prevent the warmth of the earth from reaching the ice. The ice should then be laid in tiers, fitted closely and chinked, leaving ten inches or a foot of space between the ice and the walls. Build up the tiers as high as is needed, and fill the spaces outside with dry sawdust, well packed down as each tier of ice is laid. Straw, chaff or shavings will answer well as packing, but they must be well packed down. The top should be covered nine or ten inches deep if sawdust is used. More than this is liable to heat, and melt the ice. Straw is sometimes used for covering, and answers a good purpose when from one and a half to two feet deep, as when ice is taken out in summer the straw can be rolled back easily, and after the ice is removed the same cold surface is rolled on again; whereas, when sawdust is used, some of the warm dust may be thrown on the ice, causing more or less waste. Whatever is used, it should be kept well tramped down so as to fill all spaces, and thus avoid the introduction of air. While it is important to keep wind from blowing into the building, good upper ventilation should be provided so as to protect the ice from the ordinary atmosphere.

Distribution of Samples of Seed Grain.

To the Editor FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

DEAR SIR,—Under instruction of the Hon. Minister of Agriculture, another distribution of sample packages of the best and most productive sorts of cereals, etc., is now being made from the Central Experimental Farm, Ottawa. The distribution will consist, as heretofore, of samples of oats, spring wheat, barley, field peas, Indian corn, and potatoes. Each sample will weigh three pounds. The quality of the seed will be of the best, the varieties true to name and the packages will be sent free to applicants, through the mail. The object in view is the improvement of the character and quality of the grain, etc., grown in Canada, an effort widely appreciated, and the choice of varieties to be sent out will be confined to those which have been found to succeed well at the Experimental Farms.

These samples will be sent only to those who apply personally; lists of names from societies or individuals cannot be considered. Only one sample of one sort can be sent to each applicant; hence, if an individual receives a sample of oats he cannot also receive one of wheat or barley. Applications should be addressed to the Director of Experimental Farms, Ottawa, and may be sent any time before the 15th of March, after which date the lists will be closed, so that samples asked for may all be sent out in good time for sowing. Parties writing will please mention the sort of grain they would prefer, and should the available stock of the variety named be exhausted, some other good sort will be sent in its place. Letters may be sent to the Experimental Farm free of postage.

WM. SAUNDERS,
Director Experimental Farms.
Ottawa, Jan. 22nd, 1900.