

FARMING

Vol. XV.

JUNE 28th, 1898.

No. 43.

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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Representative for Great Britain and Ireland, W. W. CHAPMAN, Fitzalan House, Arundel St., Strand, LONDON, ENG.

TOPICS FOR THE WEEK

Agricultural News and Comments.

The Devon breed of cattle was introduced into the United States the same year that Shorthorns were, in 1817, but they have not been as favorably received and have not met with the popularity that the Shorthorns have. The Devons are said to be a typical general purpose cattle. The cows give a good quality of milk containing high percentage of butter fat. The beef qualities of the breed are the very best. One serious objection to the Devon breed is their slow growth.

In 1870 the yearly average rate of freights per bushel for wheat from Chicago to New York was, *via* lake and canal, 17.10 cents, lake and rail, 22 cents, and all-rail, 33.3 cents. In 1897 the rate was 5.22 cents *via* lake and canal, 7.42 cents *via* lake and rail, and 12.5 cents *via* rail alone. The lowest year for lake and canal freight was in 1895, when the rate was 4.11 cents. The lowest year for lake and rail freight was in 1890, when the rate was 0.61 cents. In 1896 the all-rail rate was the lowest, when it decreased to 12 cents. The decrease in all the rates during the past 27 years has been full 300 per cent.

In 1880 the acreage of wheat in the United States was 37,986,717 acres; the average yield 13.1 bushels per acre, and the average price in December 95.1 cents. In 1897 the acreage was 39,465,066; the average yield 13.4 bushels, and the price in December 80.8 cents. The highest price in December of any year was in 1881, when wheat went up as high as \$1.19 per bushel, the lowest price in December of any year was in 1894, when it dropped to 49.1 cents. The greatest average yield per acre was in 1891, when it reached 15.3 bushels per acre, and the lowest average yield in 1881, when it was only 10.2 bushels per acre.

The United States crop report makes a favorable indication for the wheat crop for the present year. The approximate estimate for the United States is 375,000,000 bushels of winter wheat, and 275,000,000 bushels of spring wheat, or a total of 650,000,000 bushels. Though this estimate may be exceeded, it is hardly safe to count on a larger estimate at this juncture. This is nearly 200,000,000 bushels more than last year, and the largest on record.

According to late statistics, the American farmer is becoming an omnivorous reader of agricultural literature. Prior to 1894 the total number of farmers' bulletins issued by the U.S. Department of Agriculture was 540,000. In 1894 the number issued was 278,500, 1895, 1,567,000, 1896, 1,891,000, and in 1897, 2,387,000. The superintendent of the division of publication says that the demand for literature is steadily increasing, and that this increase seems likely to continue until every one of the 5,500,000 farmers of the United States is provided with literature sent out by the department bearing upon agriculture.

Professor Robertson has recently visited the creameries in the Northwest Territories. The butter business in that section is progressing, and it is expected that there will be an increased output this season. The great mining districts of the West will be able to take all the butter these creameries can supply. Professor Robertson, on his return from the West, will visit England on business connected with his department.

Through the skill of the chemist the farmer may find another competitor in the market for supplying food. It seems that sawdust is very good food. When sawdust and timothy hay are analyzed it is found that their component parts are almost identically the same. A German scientist has recently invented an apparatus for converting sawdust into cakes. These cakes may be used for cattle, horses, etc. The new substance consists of two parts of fine sawdust and one part of bran and muriatic acid. After fermentation the mixture is baked. It is then damped by means of water, when it makes a good substitute for hay or straw, and is also good fodder for cattle and horses.

The Philippine Islands are south-east of China and contain about 100,000 square miles, with a population estimated as high as 10,000,000. There are three seasons, a cold season from November to March, a hot season from March to June, and a rainy season from June to November. The islands are rich in natural resources, which are still largely undeveloped. Large quantities of tobacco, hemp, sugar cane, coffee and cocoa are produced, a considerable part of which is shipped to the United States. The value of all imports from the Philippines fluctuates widely between \$5,000,000 and \$16,000,000 annually.

Bone is one of the most valuable foods for hens. If the poultry raiser has no bone-cutter or bone-mill, many bones that could be used for the hens will be wasted. Bones are very tough, and are not easily broken by pounding with a hammer. To facilitate such work, however, bones should be heated in an oven or partially burnt. If well-steamed, they also become brittle. After heating the bones, pound them on a flat stone, and they will be found not so difficult to break as before.

It will be of interest to know that in European countries the governments assist very materially in regard to freight rates on agricultural products. France has obtained reductions of 30 to 50 per cent. on agricultural products and manures. Denmark has given a subsidy of £8300 to a steamship line for the bacon trade, and milk and butter are there forwarded by passenger trains at good rates. In Belgium free carriage is given for milk, vegetables, poultry, etc., carried by farmers for immediate market. In addition to its efforts towards decreasing rates, Germany gave in 1895 £246,000

as a first instalment towards making light railways, for which purpose Denmark has also granted large sums. The colony of Tasmania gives guaranteed freights.

A road grader is one of the most necessary implements for a township to possess. To depend upon manual labor for the first grading of roads and the repair of others that require re-shaping is a useless waste of labor and money. Improved road machinery is as great a saving in road making as is the self binder or the steam thrasher in farming operations. The grader in the hands of a skilful operator will do the work of fifty to seventy five men in grading and levelling the roadway.

Our British Letter.

Co-operation in England.

(From Our Special Correspondent.)

London, Eng., June 6, 1898.

In a recent article I promised to refer to the question of co-operation in England. We here know well what it is in Canada and continental countries, thanks to the governments and press of these nations. In England, too, there is a good deal of co-operation; but, unfortunately, it is not amongst agriculturists. It is amongst the consumers. These gentry have co-operative stores in some of our large towns by means of which they purchase their consumable goods in large quantities and also very cheap, and, when they have them, they sell them to the individual members at a price which none of the retail shops can match.

But these same gentry hold annually in a different district what they term a "Co-operative Congress." At this the chief officials, etc., enlarge on the advantage of the co-operative system, and, sometimes—as this year—they go out of their way to "teach their grandmothers how to suck eggs" (to use a colloquialism). The congress for this year has just concluded its annual deliberations. I don't intend to refer at length to them, but I simply cite the affair as one common in all countries, *etc.*, there are always and everywhere to be found those who, by some perversity, think they can teach the agriculturist either a short cut to wealth, or at the least, teach him how to manage the business, in which he has spent a lifetime, better by far than he himself is able to manage it. In a country like England, where the farming community is conservative in every characteristic to an enormous degree, this advice is not listened to with much attention by that community.

With much advice of the description indicated flying about ever and anon, it is, perhaps, hardly to be supposed that our farmers have yet taken to co-operation in any large or national sense. It may be, and is, unfortunate, but that is the simple fact.

However, I am able to state, on the best authority, that some of our agricultural institutions are not only engaged in looking into the subject of co-operation (both for the purposes of purchase and of sale), but that there is a possibility that it will be tried in a form which can be commended. The subject is a very difficult one, so far, at any rate, as co-operation for the purposes of sale are concerned, and this arises, in my opinion, more from the phlegmatic and conservative temperament of our cultivators than from anything else.

Co-operation among the farmers for the purpose of purchasing seeds, manures, implements, feeding