

THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE

AND HOME MAGAZINE.

THE LEADING AGRICULTURAL JOURNAL IN THE DOMINION.

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JOHN WELD, MANAGER.

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Address - THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE, c/o THE WILLIAM WELD CO., LONDON, ONTARIO, CANADA.

Co-operative Pork-packing.

A Queen's County, P. E. I., reader writes us as follows: "As a constant reader, who highly appreciates your publication, believing that you subordinate all other interests to that of the farmer's, I beg to ask your opinion in the matter of co-operative pork-packing by private enterprise. A packing establishment of a capacity of say 800 hogs daily was started in Charlottetown about the 20th of Nov. last. The prices paid for choice hogs have been: November, 5c.; December, 4c. to 4 1/2c. Of late, am informed a little better prices obtain. However, by a letter published in our local paper, we are told that we are being 'fleeced, literally robbed,' by this packer. Although I must confess as a farmer this is not my view of the case, still, as a result, a large meeting of the farmers of Prince County convened in Summerside on January 28th and resolved to have a co-operative packing and shipping house established at Summerside, ready for operation by September next. Now, certain it is that there is not sufficient hogs as yet to supply one factory, and supposing there was plenty for two, do you advise we farmers to invest in such an enterprise? In your opinion, is the pork-packing to-day in the hands of a combine? About what ought we to be getting for choice hogs at present? What has been the average price of Canadian bacon in the English market, say from September? What the American, during the same period? Please reply next issue."

A LETTER ON THE SUBJECT.

To the Editor FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

SIR, - In reply to enquiry of the 22nd inst., re the proposed Farmers' Pork-packing House, I beg to state that I have heard of such industries being started in towns in the Province of Ontario by farmers on the co-operative system. You ask, "Do you consider it advisable for farmers to launch into such an enterprise which costs so much to equip and requires such an expert staff to manage and run." In reply I beg to state that so far as my observation goes in regard to farmers' co-operative establishments where large capital is required, I am led to believe that it is not advisable for farmers to put their money into an enterprise of this kind for the following reasons:

- 1st. - The amount of money required for buildings, plant, the running of the business and establishing agencies in Britain would amount to a large sum. 2nd. - That in a co-operative institution of this kind there are too many individuals to please, as each shareholder has a voice in the matter, and farmers are not likely to sanction such large outlays of money as would be necessary at times to meet competition that do not always yield a profit. 3rd. - I have not seen it shown by any person that the profits of the business are unreasonably high, or that any combine exists among the packers to keep the price of hogs down below proper values. 4th. - The history of co-operative institutions amongst the farmers of Ontario is such as to make prudent men careful about investing their money in an undertaking of this kind. Everything goes

well while good profits are being realized, but there usually comes a time of keen competition, that the limit of profitable investment is overstepped, and, perhaps, the market gives away at the same time. Then is the time that every man interested should stand firm and face the difficulty, but instead of that you have dissatisfaction, followed by desertion of the penurious and weak-kneed, who leave the better men to face the trouble. 5th. - If such an enterprise should meet with great success at the start and divert a large portion of the trade from the regular packing houses then these establishments would for a time pay the farmers five or ten cents per hundred pounds more for their hogs than could be realized through the co-operative plan. This would be sufficient to demoralize the whole business and bring loss to the stockholders of the new system. This is no mere theory, but the history of farmers' co-operative ventures when they come in direct contact with large modern business establishments.

I think that the whole has been profitable to those that engaged in it, and there may be room for more establishments of the kind, but I would not advise the farmers to put their money into them with the idea that they will make a fortune out of the business. The Canadian farmer will find it profitable to improve his breed, management and feeding of hogs, raising the kind that are demanded by the packers for their bacon trade in the British market.

Victoria Co., Ont. H. Y. GLENDINNING.

THE QUESTION OF PRICES.

To the Editor FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

DEAR SIR, - We are now paying \$5.12 1/2 per hundredweight for selected singers delivered at our factory. Your second enquiry, we judge, arises from a desire to compare the relative values of American and Canadian bacon in England. We fear, however, that this will be an almost impossible task. England is peculiar. Nearly every county uses a distinctive cut, and establishes a price of its own for that particular variety. Now, the Canadian curer makes what is known as a Wiltshire side; practically, this represents his total effort in export meats. The American packer, on the contrary, does not make Wiltshire sides to any extent; his hogs do not lend themselves to this cut, and their meats go to an entirely different class of consumers and a different section of the country. Therefore, we do not keep in close touch with the average price made for American product, inasmuch as it does not in any sense come in competition with Canadian. Yours truly,

J. W. FLAVELLE, Managing Director Wm. Davies Packing Co. Toronto, March 5th.

[NOTE. - As a general rule, the old adage, "Let the shoemaker stick to his last," is a good one, and the business of farming is important and intricate enough to require the best energies of most men, but the success which has in the past attended cheese factories and creameries run on the co-operative plan is one exception to the rule, though there is obviously a good deal of difference between running a cheese factory and a modern pork-packing establishment. At the same time, the FARMER'S ADVOCATE is anxious to promote any plan of handling farm products calculated to be of real and lasting benefit to the farmers. Hence the above subject is a good one, the discussion of which we welcome, and would be glad to hear from any one who has any actual facts to give of experience in co-operative pork-packing among farmers, successfully or otherwise. - EDITOR.]

STOCK.

Fads in Stock-raising.

BY WALTER LYNCH, WESTBOURNE, MAN.

[A portion of an address delivered at the Live Stock Breeders' Convention in Winnipeg, February 17th.]

Perhaps you may think I ought to say something about fads in breeding, but I will not, for there are none in it. If there are any in connection with it they are in the market. The ordinary breeder is simply a merchant trying to supply the demands of the market. He may try to influence it, which is quite right, for each one has the best kind, the best of the kind, and wants to make the best out of it when he puts it on the market; but they are equally willing to supply you with cattle without horns, cattle with short horns, or cattle with the longest kind of horns for dehorning purposes, though why any one should want to cut a decent pair of horns off a decent, well-behaved cow is more than I can understand. If you think hornless cattle more quiet I may say I have had some mulley cows and I never had one that could not lick any horned cow of equal weight. Whenever I have seen dehorned cows they were always of you ever seen a person or a cow badly gored? I never did, and I have been among cattle all my life; but I have known people to be knocked down and trampled, and I know of a man just now who has his leg broken by a kick from a dehorned bull, and I respect the bull for it. I have always found cows' tails more troublesome than their horns, and I

would be very glad to see some improvement made in that part of their anatomy if it can be done without impairing their milking qualities; but I am afraid that it is not possible, for our dairy cattle experts have proved, to their own satisfaction at least, that a cow cannot give good milk or much of it whose tail is not of the proper length. I think the rule is the longer the cow's tail the longer the yarn her owner is justified in spinning about her. Some people say dehorned cattle thrive better. Those I have seen have not proved it to me. Others say a cow will make more butter after the operation, and I have lately seen an ingenious theory to account for it. I give it to you for what it is worth. It is, a dehorned cow having no place to wear her rings makes them up into butter. I said I would give you the theory for what it is worth, but I know it is correct, for I have seen the rings in the butter and heard of them in the market. Others say the operation makes a market for dehorning tools and gives employment to the dehorning fend, and I think perhaps those people have struck the key to the dehorning fad.

After carefully weighing all the arguments I have seen for and against dehorning, I have come to the conclusion that although it may be somewhat more painful, it is quite as useful as cutting off pigs' tails. You may not all remember it, but fifty years ago the man who allowed his pigs to wear their tails was considered a very poor, slovenly farmer. His pigs were generally of the kind known as razor-backs, very like some of those we see at our exhibitions, and both pig and owner were held in utter contempt by progressive farmers. The owner was considered what our smart writers now would call a "back number." But the back number has come to the front, and brought his pig with him, tail and all; - the very identical pig that prosperous farmers tried for fifty years to get rid of, and now he is not only allowed to wear his tail in good society, but progressive farmers hail him as the perfection of hoggishness. By the way, I would like to ask pig breeders if they know anything of that wonderful, long-sided bacon hog that brings such a high price in the market; or of that other equally wonderful, early-maturing, easily-fattened pig that makes four pounds of pork for every pound of food he consumes? I may have this thing wrong; it may be one pound of pork for four of food, but it does not make much difference. Of course to obtain these results you must feed a "balanced ration," and you will have to go to your chemist to find out what this is. I don't know of any farmers, except "Farmer Brown" and "Invicta," who know what a "balanced ration" is. In fact, a good many farmers think the animal itself is an important factor in balancing his ration, and that prescribing a certain ration for a lot of differing animals is a good deal like a doctor feeling one man's pulse to diagnose some other man's disease. I presume the scientific definition of a balanced ration would be "one containing the proper proportions of the elements necessary to build up an animal regardless of cost." But the practical everyday ration is the one that gives the best results for the least cost. I don't want to be understood as classifying a balanced ration as necessarily a fad, though it may easily be made one; but I don't want any one to ask me any questions about it, for I cannot answer them, and won't try. It is a problem containing a large unknown and unknowable quantity, and that unknown quantity is the animal itself. An analyst can tell just what amount of heat is in a given quantity of coal, but he cannot even guess what amount of useful force it will develop in an unknown engine, with an unknown stoker; but if he is also a good mechanical engineer, and can examine the engine and stoker and all the surrounding conditions, he can tell very nearly what effective force it will develop. But this man is dealing with much more material things than animal life, and is not confronted by that unknown quantity. So too an analyst can take a steer to pieces and resolve him into his original elements and tell us what they are and what foods contain them, but he cannot build him up again, and can only guess what proportion of the elements consumed are in evidence or by what process nature formed them into a steer. He may figure out a fairly correct theory, but he will have spoiled the steer for practical purposes, and in order to test his theory must have another, and there may be enough difference in the physical organism of the two steers to materially affect the result, and it is only by careful and intelligent observation of each individual animal we can even approximately estimate this unknown quantity.

We have been told by analysts that turnips contain very little food, and that wheat straw contains a great deal, but the foolish steer goes on eating turnips and gets fat, while the wise scientific steer hies him away to the nutritious straw stack, and there proves - what? That his animal economy was not calculated on a wheat-straw basis. These scientific problems relating to animal life are very like three-legged stools; if the legs are all in, and the proper length, they are all right, but a three-legged stool with only two legs is no good, and you had better sit on the floor at once, as you are bound to come there, and probably get hurt by the fall.

But you are beginning to think this paper is an unknown quantity and has no end, but you are wrong, it is finished, and, in conclusion, allow me

to say I do not in fact, I think of good than meeting of mail United States, Institute work, liar he startled his lies. Some as this worthy contain germs and pruned, knowledge. But trustful of their get more, the state, a kind of those fad germs too rankly be there were no possible a breed drop a fad ger grow into prof other breeder, into trouble for

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How Scotch

To the Editor F I see some lambs. The r of Scotch shep end of the sc testicles they catches them with a part of that he will c will catch the a lamb he tak hand, then he with the head the right posi the thumb an hold of the en cuts off the e been practic and I never k knives, one t larger and str approve of cl allow anyone