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(Monographs)**

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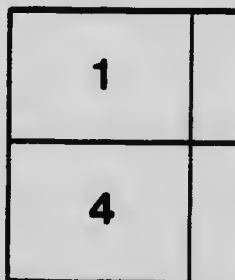
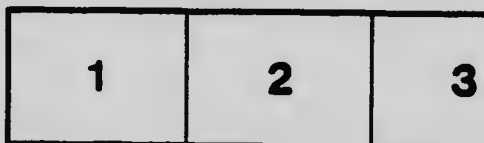
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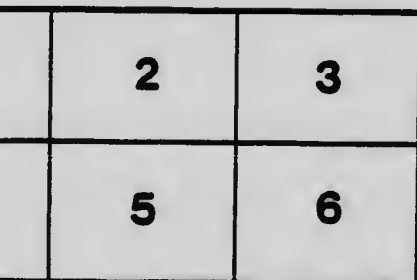
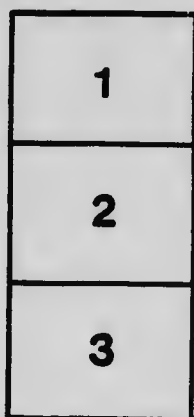
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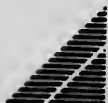
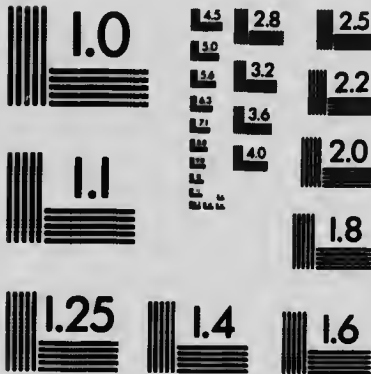
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MACDONALD COLLEGE

Circular No. 7.

SHEEP RAISING

By

A. A. MacMillan B.S.A.

In charge of Sheep Husbandry, Stock Farm Department.

SOME FACTS ABOUT SHEEP RAISING.

Wool in the spring and lambs in the fall sell at prices which return handsome profits to the flock owner.

Labor is scarce and costly. Sheep raising helps to solve the labor problem.

Farm capital is often limited. It requires less money to establish sheep than most other classes of stock.

A sheep barn, large enough to accommodate fifty ewes, can be built for three to five hundred dollars. Can you build suitable stables for other stock as cheaply?

It costs money to eradicate weeds by cultivation. The cost of keeping weeds in check is minimized where sheep are kept.

Are you making money out of your rough pasture lands? Sheep raising has been found most profitable on such farms because they net a higher average return with a minimum investment in land, buildings and stock.

Cheap roughages such as cereal straws and particularly pea, oat and bean straws may be used as a supplement to the more expensive hays, thereby reducing the cost of winter feeding.

FLOCK ESTABLISHMENT AND IMPROVEMENT

Select a breed that has demonstrated its hardiness, profitableness, and popularity in your district or under similar conditions elsewhere. Do not attempt to introduce a new breed except under special conditions. A new breed must prove itself superior to existing breeds before it will become popular in the district hence the introduction and trying out of new breeds should be left to experienced hands. If your farm is of a heavy nature and produces abundance of pasture one of the larger breeds may be selected. If on the other hand it is rough with scanty pasture one of the smaller and more active breeds will likely prove most profitable.

Start in a small way and increase your flock as experience and success is attained. Flocks of five to twenty five ewes usually give a higher average profit than flocks of fifty to one hundred ewes. Successful breeding and rearing of purebreds requires the knowledge and experience of a specialist. It is seldom advisable for the beginner to attempt the breeding of purebreds. A grade flock costs much less and is easier to handle with success.

Purchase the best individuals that are available from well graded flocks. Age, size, type, quality and utility are factors that should always be kept in mind. The most profitable ewe is one that produces a highly marketable fleece of good weight and a pair of market lambs annually.

Buy a purebred ram to head the flock. This is the cheapest and most effective means of improvement. You cannot be too careful in selecting your flock ram. Individuality, pedigree and ability to breed good stock are factors to consider before purchasing.

FEEDING.

Feed liberally, judiciously and regularly. You cannot expect a good growth of wool and strong, healthy, active lambs unless the ewes are fed a palatable, nutritious and well balanced ration.

Oats and bran in the proportion of two parts of oats and one part of bran make an excellent grain ration for breeding ewes at all times. In early winter if the ewes are in good condition

they will require little or no grain but as lambing time approaches some grain is necessary in order that the condition and vitality of the ewes may be maintained. Ewes may be started on one quarter of a pound of grain daily gradually increasing the amount up to one or two pounds previous to lambing. Oil cake may be added to the above ration after lambing.

There is no better roughage for sheep than alfalfa or clover hays. Timothy hay is expensive and unsatisfactory for sheep feeding. It contains too much fibre, little protein and is hard to digest. Cereal straws such as pea, bean and oat straws are relished by sheep and may be fed as a supplement to the more expensive leguminous hays, thereby reducing the cost of feeding.

Roots are indispensable for the best results in sheep feeding. Swedes are used in preference to mangels for winter feeding although mangels are preferred for milk production after lambing. Four to six pounds of swedes may be fed daily to each ewe during the early part of the winter gradually reducing the amount to one or two pounds per day previous to lambing. The feeding of too many roots during March and April has a tendency to produce large, watery lambs which lack vitality resulting in trouble and loss at lambing.

HINTS ON MANAGEMENT.

Note the date on which you turn your ram with the ewes. Rams should be watched closely to make sure that the ewes are being safely settled in lamb. Shy breeders if not detected may cause the loss of a lamb crop.

Give the ewes abundance of exercise. They should be allowed the run of a yard or field during the day, being housed only in stormy weather. Sheep barns should be dry, airy, well lighted and free from draughts; avoid excitement and handle gently.

Examine the ewes sometime before the first lamb is expected. One or two ewes often get in lamb earlier than is anticipated. Lambs dropped by these ewes are often lost through exposure. Ewes that are expected to lamb should be separated from the rest of the flock. The period of gestation for the ewe is one hundred and forty-two to one hundred and forty-seven days.

A teaspoonful of brandy in a little milk will often revive a lamb that is chilled. Ewes that fail to mother their lambs should be tied in a small enclosure until the maternal instinct is restored.

PRECAUTIONS AGAINST DISEASE.

Dip your sheep at least once a year. Dipping destroys ticks, lice, and skin diseases, improves the quality and fibre of the wool. The best growth and strongest vitality are not obtained without dipping. Liquid and powder dips are both effective.

Pare the feet before turning to pasture. Untrimmed hoofs often crack or break causing lameness, which has a direct effect on the milk flow besides reducing the condition of the ewe.

During the fly season, provision should be made for tarring the nostrils of the sheep. Sheep that are kept properly tarred run little danger of contracting grub in the head. This may be easily accomplished by occasionally tarring the top surface of two inch auger holes in logs or timbers used for salting the sheep.

Give the ewes a change of pasture when practicable. Old pastures often act as breeding grounds for worms. Internal parasites are one of the worst enemies of the sheep.

Fresh water and plenty of shade add much to the health and comfort of the flock.



