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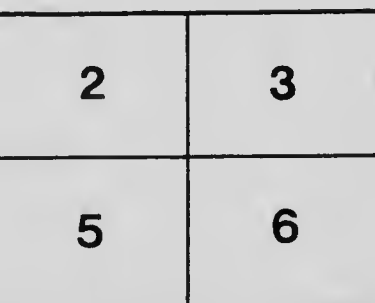
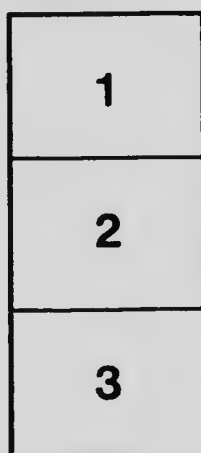
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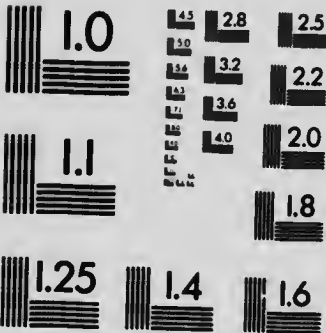
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DOMINION DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

LIVE STOCK BRANCH.

JOHN BRIGHT,  
Commissioner.

H. S. ARKELL,  
Asst. Commissioner.

PAMPHLET No. 4.

*April 1914.*

SHEEP AND GOAT DIVISION.

THE MANAGEMENT OF SMALL FLOCKS SERIES.

ADVICE TO THE BEGINNER IN THE SELECTION OF  
BREEDING STOCK.

By T. REG. ARKELL.

Many men think that, after they have spent a few months in learning the theory of sheep husbandry, they are capable of pursuing practical management with an assurance of easy success. They have possibly learned the symptoms of diseases with their remedies and in detail scientific management, but exigencies always arise for which they are unprepared and which probably, when studying the subject, they did not deem worthy of their consideration. It is strict attention to the little things in sheep raising that so generally leads to a great success. No one should enter extensively into the business without having had a thorough practical experience. Otherwise it is best for him to commence in a smaller fashion. As his flock increases in size so will his experience and he will learn for himself the proper methods to apply to every condition that may arise.

Too many beginners display an over-confidence in their prowess and knowledge of the sheep business. This makes them a prey to the salesman who sees no need of correcting mistakes that the beginner may make in the purchase of his breeding stock. Most generally this class of novice wishes to make personal selection of the animals and, if his ideals respecting type are somewhat astray, as is by no means infrequently the case, he gets in his flock many sheep which he would be better without. Had he been sensibly disposed and confessed his ignorance of many points of breed type, the salesman, unless he were most unscrupulous, would have aided him in choosing animals that would prove valuable to him. Few breeders who have any sort of reputation at all to sustain will take a rank advantage of a man who ingenuously leaves the selection of his purchase with them. In fact, many breeders state that they much prefer a buyer to make a personal choice than sell by description through the mail, since in the latter case they feel compelled, in order to uphold their honesty and trustworthiness, to send a better animal than the price really calls for. With personal selection the seller's liability is limited, since he does not feel himself responsible for what the purchaser does.

## SELECTION OF BREED OR TYPE.

Choice of breed is the first difficulty that besets the beginner. The common question with those entering the sheep business is: What is the best breed? To that the only answer that can be given is that all breeds are good when adapted to the conditions under which they will be subjected in the district where the beginner's farm or ranch is located, and meet local market requirements. The selection of breed also depends largely upon the individual taste of the shepherd and the object he has in view in raising them. In Canada success can be attained with any of the popular breeds produced here, but no person should ever commence raising a breed for which he knows he cannot obtain a ready sale. Perhaps his means and conditions do not warrant him to enter into the production of pure breeds. If he is breeding sheep merely for mutton purposes, high class grades will suffice, yet even in buying grades he should take care to select only those possessing a good mutton conformation. Many farmers think that, since they own simply grades, 'any old sheep' at all will produce good enough results in the flock, and, therefore, the more cheaply they can buy the better. This is false economy, for very frequently they obtain in their flock animals that do not pay for the expense of their keep.

## UNIFORMITY OF TYPE.

Unity of type in the flock should be the direct aim of every breeder. This applies to grades as well as pure-breeds, and refers to the selection of a type of sheep, possessing similar mutton and wool characteristics. With pure breeds this feature is especially important. In a flock of sheep where several types obtain, choice of a suitable ram is most difficult. Besides, disparity in this respect detracts from the general appearance of the flock and gives the buyer or casual observer an unfavourable opinion. Every breeder should aspire to produce a distinctive type. He should endeavour to breed a class of sheep possessing characteristics that, wherever the animals are, they will be recognized as his breeding. But to attain this he should never uphold some fancy character in preference to utility features. No features should be given undue prominence beyond another, especially one that is purely ornamental. The establishment of an ultra form of some fashionable characteristic has at times become an obsession with many breeders of pure-bred sheep, and this sin (for it cannot be called anything else) must be avoided. The ultimate destination of most pure-bred rams is at the head of grade flocks, and their utility features should only be taken into consideration.

The beginner should study well and become familiar with the type or breed he has selected. He must be able to recognize undesirable features and disqualifications. These he should endeavour to preclude from his flock, and to this end he should practice a rigorous culling every year. Individuals which do not possess the merits that his ideal calls for should be banished from the flock. Sheep having grave defects of character or type should not be used for breeding purposes. The absolutely perfect sheep, however, is still unknown, but every breeder should essay to approach as well as possible to what he considers perfection of type. Therefore, he should practice judicious care in the initial selection of his foundation stock and in his subsequent breeding operations.



Merino Ram.



Southdown Ram.





Lincoln Ram.



Shropshire Ram.



Border Leicester Ram.



Suffolk Ram.



Cotswold Ram.



Hampshire Ram.



Oxford Down Ram.



Class B Merino Ram



Cheviot Ram.



Dorset Horn Ram.

## CLASSIFICATION OF THE MOST IMPORTANT BREEDS.

Wool Breeds....	Fine Woolled or Merino.	White-faced.....	(a) Spanish or American Merino. (b) American Merino. (c) Rambouillet and Delaine.	
	Medium Woolled	Dark-faced or "Downs."	Oxford Down. Hampshire. Suffolk. Shropshire. Southdown.	
		White-faced.....	Dorset Horn. Cheviot.	
Mutton Breeds.....		Reddish-brown faced	Tunis.	
	Coarse Woolled.	Dark-faced.....	Highland.	
		White-faced.....	Lincoln. Cotswold.....	White-faced. Gray-faced.
			Leicester.....	English. Border.
			Romney Marsh.	

## THE MERINO.

In America the Merino is separated, according to degree of skin wrinkling or folding, into three distinct classes: A, B, and C. Although skin wrinkling comprises the obvious means of division, fundamentally it is based upon the fineness of the wool fibre, since a direct correlation exists between the quality of wool and extent of skin wrinkling. The most heavily wrinkled are recognized as possessing the finest fleece. The American Merino, which is descended, without radical change, from the ultra fine-wooled Spanish, is wrinkled virtually over the entire body. The wool is very fine and has a large yolk or oil content, which gives to it a high shrinkage. The skin folds of representative animals of class C are confined mostly to the neck and breast with a few slight ones, at times, upon the shoulders, thighs and tail head. The mutton conformation of sheep in this class is superior to that of animals in A and B. In this respect all of the Merino breeds resemble the type of dairy cattle. Emphasis is placed upon wool production, and, in consequence, mutton characters are neglected. In this country their use is limited to crossing with mutton breeds upon the ranch. They are more gregarious than mutton sheep, herd more easily and for these reasons are rather better adapted to range conditions. The rams are usually horned, and the ewes, hornless, although there are sub-classes of the Rambouillet and Delaine where both sexes are polled.

## THE 'DOWNS.'

The 'Downs' are of British origin as, in fact, are all of the mutton breeds except the Tunis, which is a native of Africa. The Oxford and Hampshire are the largest; the Southdown, the smallest. The Southdown, with the exception of the Highland, is the smallest breed raised in this country. There is not a very great

degree of difference between the Oxford and Hampshire in respect to size. The Oxford shears more wool of a somewhat coarser nature than the Hampshire and has a more compact body. Both are wooled upon the poll and legs and frequently over the face. The hair colour of the Oxford will vary from a black to an even gray; while the Hampshire in this regard is uniformly black or dark brown. The Suffolk to a great extent resembles the Hampshire. It is rather smaller, however, and possesses no wool on the head or legs. The Shropshire is exceptionally well covered upon the face and legs, the wool surrounding the eyes and descending even below the pasterns. The hair colour is a uniform brown. It is not so large as the Oxford or Hampshire. The mutton of the Southdown is held in high repute for its exquisite flavour. However, the yield is not as great as with the other larger breeds, nor does it shear so heavily. The face colour is an even gray or light brown. Wool covers the poll and legs but is seldom found on any part of the face. The 'Downs' are claimed to be the hardiest of the mutton breeds and capable of withstanding most severe winter weather. Both males and females are polled. In fact, the Dorset Horn and Black-faced Highland, of which both sexes bear horns, are the only prominent mutton breeds with these most unnecessary appendages.

#### OTHER MEDIUM-WOOLED BREEDS.

Dorset Horns, owing to their ability to breed fairly assuredly at any time of the year have been developed largely into a general purpose sheep for the production of early, or what are commonly called 'hot-house' lambs. For this purpose Tunis, having a similar qualification, are also raised. Consequently, these breeds have become popular especially with farmers living near large cities, where there is a demand for this class of mutton. In size they are comparable with the Shropshire. The Dorset is covered with wool on the poll and legs, but the Tunis is usually bare, resembling in this respect the Suffolk.

Thus far the Cheviot has not been introduced into Canada to any extent. It is not a very large breed, and the quality of its wool is on the borderland between the medium and coarse-wooled types. It has been bred for years on the hills of Northern England and Scotland, and should, therefore, be pre-eminently suited to rough and hilly districts. Wool covering is similar to that of the Suffolk.

#### COARSE-WOOLED BREEDS.

The Lincoln is probably a little larger than the other coarse-wooled breeds. In fact, it is sometimes called the largest of the domestic classes of sheep. The wool is long and coarse and does not command so high a price as the medium. The mutton too is of a coarser texture. The Cotswold and Leicester are very similar in general character to the Lincoln. The Leicester, however, possesses no wool on the head and legs; while the Cotswold is heavily covered upon these parts and the Lincoln bears only a slight tuft on the poll. The production of these animals in America is confined mostly to Canada. Very few are raised in the United States.

Black-faced Highland sheep are most uncommon in this country. There are only one or two flocks. They are even smaller than the Southdown, and the wool is longer and coarser than that of the Lincoln. Owing to their diminutive size, they are not a profitable sheep to raise under mixed farming conditions, but, since it is claimed they will thrive under neglect better than other breeds, are best adapted to rocky and hilly regions where free range can be obtained.

