

Feeding Sheep on Wasted Fodder

It would be greatly interesting to know, could it be known, how much mutton could be produced from fodders that now are wasted because they are not utilized. In this discussion those fodders only will be considered that grow up in the unfenced fields of the Northwestern states.

Two obstacles are in the way. One is that the lands as a rule are not fenced, and the other is that the grain shocks are oftentimes left in the fields for weeks after the grain is cut, and because of the presence of the shocks, sheep cannot have access to the field.

This means that the weeds and other vegetation along with the numerous grain heads lost in harvesting are not utilized. In other words, the food that would maintain not fewer than say, 10,000,000 for two months in that state is virtually lost. In South Dakota the same would be at least measurably true. In Montana the loss would not be so much, for the reason that the area devoted to the growing of grain is much less, but the loss in Montana is material.

Loss in Washington.

But in no place is this loss greater relatively than in the Big Bend country in Washington. There the Russian thistles grow to perfection. There it is that they take complete possession of the land where they are not combated, to the virtual exclusion of all kinds of crops. Of course, sheep in common with other kinds of stock, will not touch Russian thistles after the prickles have been really formed on the plants, but at an earlier period sheep will feed upon them and to the extent of keeping them in check, so that their presence will do but little harm.

Summer Forage.

This means that the tumbling mustard, Russian thistles and Winter rye and Winter wheat pastures would carry sheep through the season from March 1st to the early Autumn months.

Now if Winter rye were sown say, in May, and if Squaw corn were grown, would not these two carry the sheep through the Autumn months and prepare those for the market that were to be sold? There

would still be one problem to solve. How would the breeding flocks be maintained during the two or three months of Winter when snow is on the ground? Will not the growth of wheat hay answer this question at the present time? In the near future it will probably be answered by the growth of sweet clover or alfalfa hay.

In Big Bend.

These references bring up the question, will it pay to grow sheep on those lines in the Big Bend country? That can only be worked out by actual test. Suppose a section of land were enclosed with fence. Suppose it was stocked with sheep, suppose it was divided in say, three parts. One part would provide Spring and early Summer pasture, a second part would provide finishing pasture, and a third part Winter food.

Would such an arrangement pay? It should pay. Each acre of such land should support at least an ewe and her lamb for a year. This would mean that 640 acres would maintain 640 ewes and 640 lambs. The wool from the ewes should pay the wage bill.

Profit Estimates.

This would leave the lambs for profit. Six hundred and forty lambs would mean at \$4.50 each a return of \$2880, or a rental of \$4.50 per acre. Suppose this were cut in two, it would represent a rental of \$2.50 per acre which would be 6 per cent on land valued at a little more than \$40 per acre. From these returns, however, there would have to be deducted the cost of fencing the land. But not more than one-tenth of the cost should be charged against each year's expenditure, as a fence will built in such an area should last for not less than 10 years.

If these estimates are correct, why would it not be a wise thing in the Big Bend country to grow sheep? Can wheat be made to pay better? The sheep would call for less labor. They would enrich the land, and they would prevent the abominable weeds from going to seed. They would also stop soil drifting. Why would not such a system of farming be better than the growing of wheat?

Learning Dairying From Holland

We can learn much from the dairy methods used in Holland. That little country is often called the cows' paradise, and it deserves the name. There is little grain farming, or mixed husbandry there and almost no stock except dairy cattle. Dairying is the principal occupation.

The land is worth from \$500 to \$1000 an acre, yet the Hollanders pay rents and interest on the investment by producing butter and cheese, which they place in the European markets in successful competition with that produced in America on land of scarcely comparable value.

The secret is: Efficient cows, excellent care, co-operation and superior quality of butter and cheese.

On a 60-acre farm in Holland the livestock usually consists of about 22 cows, 9 heifers, 40 sheep, 15 pigs and one or two horses. About 24 acres is meadow and the rest pasture, as dairying is on a strictly grass basis. Few fields are larger than five acres, and the cows are frequently changed from one pasture to another, so the grass may be renewed.

Cow Selection.

Only a few choice bulls are kept for sires and the greatest care is exercised in selecting females. The cows are selected by a three-fold method: First, in the sire; second, in the young calf, judged largely by the milking qualities of the mother; and, lastly, the greatest of all tests is applied, performance at pail. Not till the cow answers this satisfactorily is she accorded a permanent place in the dairy.

Mr. Kuperas, a leading Friesland dairyman, has an exceptionally fine herd of red and white Holstein-Friesians and keeps a careful record of each cow by testing the milk every two weeks. The average yield of 30 of his best cows for one year was 11,275 pounds of milk and 394 pounds of butter fat. The average lactation period was 306 days and no cow was milked more than one year. In Friesland there are 3200 cow testing associations of 12 members each.

The Winter grain ration consists almost entirely of oil cake, fed only

to the heavy milkers in quantities of from two to four pounds a day. The principal feed, however, is hay, each cow receiving 30 pounds daily. It takes the great capacity of these cows to handle such a large quantity of roughage.

Clean Stables.

A cow stable in America is usually an untidy, uninviting and in many cases absolutely filthy place where, to the disgrace of civilization, human food is produced. In Holland a cow stable is as clean and carefully cared for as any room in the house.

In the Province of Friesland most of the butter and cheese is made in factories, practically all of which are co-operative. When the commercial starter is used in ripening the cream, immense numbers of bacteria, capable of producing an agreeable flavor, are introduced; the growth of the undesirable is checked and many of the unpleasant flavors already produced are covered up, so to speak, either wholly or in part.

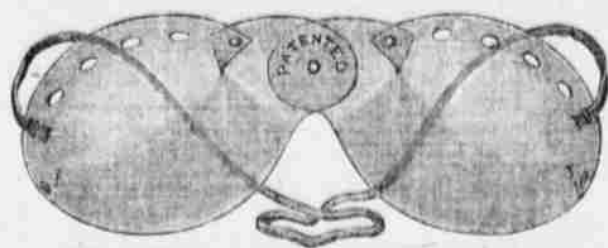
The cost of these commercial products is so small, and the method of using them is so simple in comparison with the benefits to be derived, that their more general use is to be recommended. The initial cost of a starter is about 50 cents, and by careful handling, it can be propagated for an indefinite period.

Pure culture starters are put up by the manufacturers in two forms: powder and liquid. They can be procured through any drug store or creamery supply house.

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