

Stock.

STOCK NOTES.

Hoard's Dairyman thinks that it is a dreadful choice to make; but between the sour cheese that does not leak, and the soft, puffy one that wobbles all around the shelves, and crawls out of the box when put in, give us a sour one. There is a ghost of a chance for it to improve—the other has started to rot and can't be stopped.

Sifted coal ashes spread in the drop behind cattle, says a contemporary, are an excellent absorbent and if any wood ashes are mixed with them they will be saved. Use plaster freely about the stables to absorb the ammonia and keep them sweet and clean. But where will the average farmer or dairyman get the ashes?

When we go to a farmer's place we want to see his horses and other stock come to him and thrust out their heads to be petted. Kindness is the great law with all kinds of stock.—Prairie Farmer.

The age of a cow has much to do with her value as a milker. A cow with her first calf never milks as well as with her third or fourth one, and for a dairy animal, as a rule, unprofitable. For this reason care should be taken in buying cows for the dairy to obtain those with their second or third calves.

An experienced farmer warns others against giving cotton-seed meal to breeding cows or to young stock of any kind. It is very difficult to digest, and fed to cows often causes abortion. Great care must be used in getting animals accustomed to this food, which cannot be fed in large quantities, even to stock accustomed to it. Young calves fed even a little have been killed by it. Linseed-oil meal is now cheap enough, and with Northern farmers will continue to have the preference.

The fattening of sheep should be commenced before the grass fails, and half a pint of grain a day is enough for a sheep at first. They should have roots or vegetables of some kind every day. In three months they can bear two quarts of grain a day if they are brought to it gradually, and have green food enough to keep their stomachs in order. Marketing half-fed sheep is wasting what you have given them. The last few pounds are the cheapest to the feeder and add to the value of the whole.

Do you know the weight of each of your horses? It is quite a satisfaction to know just how much each horse weighs, and as plentiful as scales are in the country there is no excuse for not knowing.

Mares in foal should not be confined too closely to the stable, but have exercise in open lots, where they can pick up bites of grass every pleasant day. Besides this their food should not be heating but of a laxative nature, so that it will keep the system in a healthy condition. The colt will come in a much better condition, and be prepared to grow the more rapidly if the mare is thus cared for.

Horses hard at work need water frequently. If a handful of oatmeal is thrown in a pailful of water, and one or two swallows given two or three times between morning and noon, or noon and night, it will stimulate them to renewed exertions and keep them fresh all day. This sort of stimulation has no bad after effects, as does that which men often take in the harvest field. The work of harvesting with self-binders is now as severe for teams as cutting grain was in the old times for men when done by hand labor, and it is a time when grain feed for horses has been mostly used up. With the labor thus thrown on the teams they need proportionate good care.

BEST BREED OF SHEEP FOR PROFIT.

Naturalists have various theories as to the origin in the primitive breed of sheep. On this the scriptures are silent. Of their form, however, they mention the ram was horned. The color, Dr. Shaw says, was tawny or dingy black. At the present there is a tendency to return to the original hue. When Jacob hired himself to Laban for his daughter, a condition was that he should receive as his share of the sheep a certain color, and he obtained the color he wanted. I do not say by what means—whether by fright or by scientific breeding. We have several instances in the bible that speak of sheep being white. But neither the history of man nor the zoological character of sheep are relative to our subject, and we only state that from the earliest period in the history of our inhabited earth sheep are, and always

have been, essential to the wants and comfort of man, and yet the population of the world is more than double the whole number of sheep. We have many distinct breeds, and these may have sprung from the flock of Abel. Sheep are found in all parts of the world. The United States stands forth in point of numbers, having at the present day 50,360,243, while the number last year exceeded this 230,383. At what time sheep were introduced into the United States we have no means of knowing, but suppose they were brought from Europe by the colonists. Notwithstanding the large number we now have, we have never produced sufficient wool for home consumption.

Sheep-husbandry is an industry essential to the prosperity of our nation in producing the flesh-food for the 56,000,000 of our people, as well as the wool to clothe them.

The profits of keeping sheep are derived from the wool, the carcass, the increase, and the fertilizing qualities of their droppings, and in some localities, in subduing the fields and woodlands noxious weeds and briars, and also by their feeding and thriving on untillable hill slopes, thus aiding and making every foot of land produce for the outlay.

The question is, what breed will give the largest return for the cost of keeping? Opinions of men differ, and they choose their favorite breeds. It is not our purpose to say in this essay which is best, but to make some suggestions or statements.

We remark that climate, soil, and locality must be well considered. Randall says: "In selecting a breed for any given locality, we must take into consideration, first, the feed and climate, and the surrounding natural circumstances, and second, the market facilities and demand. We should then make choice of the breed which, with the advantages possessed, and under all circumstances, will yield the greatest net value of marketable products." It is true that competition in fruits and the dairy products on high-priced land, especially near cities, may kill out sheep-raising.

Many farmers, owing to their zeal and want of experience, without giving the business of sheep-raising due consideration, make a mistake in choosing a breed, and become discouraged and quit the business with a loss to themselves.

There is a tendency to breed larger sheep at present in order to increase the meat production, and at the same time to keep up the intrinsic value of the fleece; therefore, sheep that are likely to produce these results will be sought for.

Before speaking of the different breeds, I remark the owner or breeder must "look well to the state of his flock," if he would make sheep-raising profitable. If he has no experience, let him begin with very few, and give them good attention. Sheep will thrive by handling kindly and seeing them every day.

Whatever breed a man selects, they should be healthy, vigorous animals, of good size, clear azure eye, florid skin, healthy gums, and teeth fast, fine brisket, good bone, round-shaped barrel, all indicating health and activity.

There are, perhaps, over fifty distinct breeds of sheep; we will refer to only a few favorite classes.

Long Wools.

The Cotswold is the best known in the United States, and is bred principally for mutton; these grow up rapidly to a large size, and also give a large, handsome fleece, and are always fat, and if not too fat, are prolific breeders, their limbs are strong, and in a few months are ready for the market.

The Leicester is also a favorite breed; the wool is longer and opens nicely, is handsomer than the Cotswold fleece, having a beautiful crimp, but from my observation they are not so hardy. I have seen some that weighed nearly 300 pounds, and Cotswolds have exceeded this weight.

The Lincoln, without doubt, produce the best wool of all long-wool breeds, and some place them in point of merit, where early maturity, size, quality of mutton, luster, weight of fleece, and length of staple are sought for. Of those I have handled I could not but admire the uniform size and make; these were a great improvement over many I have seen with lank, panther-like frame and long legs; for some reason this breed is not generally popular, yet they possess all the good points sought by breeders.

The Middle Wools.

The Southdown, sometimes called the Sussexdown, are remarkably active, always on the watch, with an intelligent look, of fine make, very hardy and docile, take on fat very readily, and mature early; the wool is rather short and coarse. They are the most numerous of downs; as many as sixty will thrive in a herd, which is not the case with long-wools.

The blood of the Southdown and some of their good points enter largely into the make-up of other downs, for this reason: they stand pre-eminently at the head of all the downs, always healthy and strong.

The Hampshiredown spring from a cross probably with the Cotswold in connection with the original Hampshire. These shear a large fleece, fatten quickly, and possess valuable points, and are the favorites of many fine breeders.

The Oxforddowns are also a breed highly prized, large and well formed dark legs and faces, and show a tuft of wool on the forehead like the Cotswold. This breed has its origin from the South-

down crossed on the Oxford in connection with the Cotswold. This breed, for length of staple and fine carcass, is becoming popular.

The Shropshiredown are large-bodied, very handsome, and originated from a cross with the Southdown and some other black-faced breed, in connection with long wool fleeces, Leicester and Cotswold. I have seen these so fat they were hardly able to rise from their beds, and weighed three hundred pounds. They are not so dark in the face and on the legs as the Southdown. They have large fleeces.

The down breeds I have mentioned, as well as some other downs I have not mentioned, are now contesting their merits in the mutton markets with the delicious mutton of the Southdown. They all far surpass the Southdown in fleece.

I come now to speak of the Merino. The commercial value of the sheep in the United States is largely in favor of the Merino and their crosses. They produce the clothing and the delaine wools, and furnish the large bulk of the mutton in the markets, and outnumber all other breeds combined. They are the backbone of the wool-growing industry of the United States.

The Spanish or American Merino has for nearly half a century stood at the head of all breeds. It is almost incredible the weight of fleece they yield; it is not uncommon to find a whole flock averaging twelve or fourteen pounds per fleece in the grease; they have the "golden hoof."

A test of their mutton with other breeds was made at the late annual meeting at Beaver of the State Wool-growers' Association, and the one hundred judges who surrounded the table were unable to decide which was the best. All animals prepared for the occasion were juicy, sweet and delicious.

When the fleece of this breed is very greasy, caused by abundant exudation, and sometimes over-abundant exudation, such sheep require liberal feeding. The Merinos of the present day that are recognized as pure and line-bred, are registered in a book authorized by an association of breeders, of a distinct and separate variety, and the same may be said of the mutton fleeces. Those who have kept stud flocks have had fine profits in supplying for breeding purposes, but that day of profit from this source alone will remain in the hands of only a few, who will be obliged to sell at lower figures.

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I have now named the leading breeds of our country, any of which are well adapted to the soil and climate of our State.

The farmer who would make the sheep industry pay will have difficulties to outlive and overcome. The first duty required of him is close attention and perseverance and indomitable energy. In handling sheep for profit, he must keep them in good condition and never overstock.

The long-wools, or the downs, will be more desirable near cities, and will bring a good return from the meat product alone. The Southdown will do well in the mountain districts. The Merino will thrive on the hill-slopes and pasture-lands of the State, and do better if remote from the mining districts, where dogs abound. The enemy of sheep is the dog.

One of the surest plans for profit is to purchase good, strong, grade Merino ewes and cross them with a long-wool ram, feed them well and have the lambs come early; graze the ewes every day on a rye field. Sell the lambs at four or five months old; they will bring high prices—over \$3 per head. The mothers will fatten in time for market, or if retained to use for another crop of lambs, their wool ought to pay the cost of keeping. Very little risk is run in a trial of this kind with grade Merino ewes. Those who prefer the English or mutton breeds will always have a market for fat lambs and fat sheep.

There is another item I will mention—the cost of keeping, and will leave out the cost of the land and buildings. This will not seem to be much in summer, for sheep will do well on thickly set short grass, and a variety of weeds and briars are chosen before the tame grass, but when we come to house them the cost increases. Taking hay as the standard by which the quantity of any daily food is determined, if we wish to grow nice wool, we must not increase the flesh and fat at the expense of the wool or any of its properties. As a general rule, the quantity fed should be in proportion to the live weight of the sheep. Matured, healthy animals always consume in the ratio of size. A sheep of 70 pounds live weight will require three pounds of hay daily, and one pint of corn and oats mixed. This amount will keep a sheep in good thriving condition, but when three or four pounds of potatoes and a quantity of cabbage leaves are fed, what they will eat, they will take on fat very readily. Some estimate two and one-half pounds of hay per day, and this amount, if good, with a daily ration of corn and oats, is sufficient for Merinos. Saxon

Merinos require less feed than the other Merinos.

It is a nice question to determine how many pounds of wool and mutton combined can be raised off an acre of ground, and the cost will vary according as the price of feed varies. Experience is given by some who have tested their breed, but no competition test has been made of the different breeds.

We must bear in mind "that it requires an equal amount of food to produce a pound of flesh or a pound of wool, without regard to the size of the sheep or the breed." If there is an exception to this rule, it is with the greasy Merino. To explain further: take a Southdown that weighs 100 pounds; it will require three and one-half pounds hay daily, while a Leicester that weighs 150 pounds will require five pounds hay daily. These will be equally profitable. We find animals in flocks that outstrip others, and grow faster and larger and produce larger fleeces. Others having the same chance make small growth. For want of time I close, leaving this part of the subject of cost unfinished.—John McDowell, of Washington County, Pa., in *Thoroughbred Stock Journal*.

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