

Poor Handling Of Wool Injures Crop

Investigation Indicates From 10 to 20 Per Cent. of Value Is Lost Annually by Neglect of Simple Measures.

A PRELIMINARY report of the investigation into the methods of marketing American wool, now being conducted by the Department of Agriculture, indicates that from 10 to 20 per cent of the value of the crop is lost annually through the neglect of a few simple measures. Under existing conditions, when American and Australian wools lie side by side in the warehouse, the poor handling of American wools is so noticeable that the price is inevitably affected. This handicap would be removed to a great extent if all growers would agree to do four things:

Sack ewe, lamb and buck fleeces in separate sacks.

Shear black sheep separately and keep the fleeces separate.

Tie the fleeces with paper twine, which does not adhere to the wool.

Remove the tags or dung locks and put them in separate sacks marked to show their contents.

383 Growers Report.

Figures prepared by the bureau of statistics and based on reports from 383 growers who sheared in 1913 a total of 2,269,005 sheep, show that at the present time about half of the flock owners sack ewe, lamb and buck wool separately, about 60 per cent separate the black fleeces and tie with paper twine, and less than one-half put tags in separate sacks. It is pointed out, however, that the correspondents who took the trouble to answer the inquiries of the investigators and from whose replies these statistics are compiled, presumably represent the more progressive element in the industry, and that if it were possible to obtain the facts from every wool grower in the country, the percentage of those using the improved methods would be found to be much lower.

It is pointed out also that although, on the face of them, these returns do not seem so unsatisfactory, the value of wools produced in a given locality is set by the general reputation already established. Buyers will not alter their prices for small individual clips, though they may be better handled than the average, and in consequence those who do not put up their wool properly are made to suffer for the sins of their neighbors.

Bar Poor Handled Wool.

Buying concerns can and may, however, allow their representatives more latitude in discriminating between individual clips. But even should they do so, prices could be altered only for clips of sufficient size to yield around 10,000 pounds of each grade contained.

Fifty-nine cases were reported in which dockage for tags was made upon the whole clip, although the tags had been separately sacked.

The remedy, the investigators declare, is to raise the reputation of a locality by an agreement among the growers not to permit any poorly handled wool to leave the community.

It can not be said that the growers who follow the practices advocated by the market at present receive much, if any, compensation for so doing. As in other lines, it rests with such progressive individuals to bring their communities up to a common standard that will be of benefit to all.

In the opinion of the investigators the reforms already mentioned would be sufficient for the present to put American wool in a different light. Later it may be advisable to adopt the Australian method of "skirting," or removing from the fleeces the wool of the legs and belly, and grading before sacking, but this is not urged now.

New Vegetable From Japan Is Udo

FOR PERSONS who like novelty in their food and in their gardens, an interesting field for experiment is offered by the new Japanese vegetable, udo. Nurserymen have grown the udo for ornamental purposes, for twenty years or more, but as a vegetable it is still comparatively unknown. On rich soil it grows to a height of 10 feet or more, producing a very ornamental mass of large green leaves and, in the late summer, long loose flower lusters, sometimes three feet in length. In appearance it is much like a larger variety of the spikenard or petty morel, a native of our woodlands.

The blanched shoots of the udo have a characteristic flavor. Properly prepared they are delicious. The plant requires little care and with the same space devoted to it, yields approximately the same amount of food for the table as asparagus and is ready for use at about the same time in the spring. After the first frost it dies down each autumn to come up again in the spring, much as asparagus and rhubarb do. A patch of it can be forced each spring for at least six years and probably much longer. The flowers attract bees and flies in such numbers that a field of it is usually humming with insects. As a honey plant, therefore, the udo deserves the attention of beekeepers.

Udo-growing is not yet sufficiently general in this country for the most inexpensive methods of cultivating to have been worked out, and conditions in America are so different from those in Japan that little benefit can be derived from the experience of Oriental growers. It is, however, reasonable to assume that the cultivation of the udo presents few difficulties. It is adapted to a wide range of climate, as is shown by the fact that it grows all over Japan, but no part of Japan suffers from drought. In this country the udo has done best in moist regions, in particular in New England, the Atlantic States as far south as the Carolinas, in the rainy region of Puget Sound, and in the trucking sections of Calif.

Plant in March or April.

Where greenhouses or cold frames are available, the seed should be planted

in March or April—one-fourth of an inch deep in soil that consists of equal parts of loam, mold and sand. As soon as the plants are 3 or 4 inches high, they can be planted out in the ground or potted and set out later. Thereafter the udo needs little attention. Its roots spread with extraordinary rapidity through loose, rich soil—udo is not recommended for poor, dry land—and the crowns soon become at least a foot across. Three and a half or four feet is therefore not too great a distance to allow between plants.

Perhaps the greatest difficulty connected with the cultivation of the udo is the blanching of the shoots. It is these that are regarded as the real delicacy, for the flavor of the stems when green has a certain rankness which is unpleasant to most palates. Various methods of blanching the early shoots have therefore been experimented with. In California excellent results have been obtained by mounding up the earth in the early spring over each plant much as is done with asparagus. Elsewhere, however, the late frosts make the soil too cold and the shoots are slow in coming through.

Another method is to put a large drain tile, with one end closed, over each hill before the spring growth starts. The shoots which come up inside the tile are well blanched but they show a tendency to produce a number of unopened leafstalks which take away from the robust growth of the shoots. To obviate this, casks or boxes filled with light material such as sand or sifted coal ashes have been tried with considerable success. In any case great care must be taken not to permit the shoots to break through into the sunlight. If they succeeded in this, they at once become green and their flavor rank. Shoots can be cut when only six inches long, but it is better to let them grow to 12 or 18 inches.

Cooking of Udo.

In the cooking of udo there is still abundant room for innovators. In all experiments, however, one thing must be remembered. When raw, the stems contain a resinous substance which gives them a decided, and to many per-

sons unpleasant, taste of pine. It is, however, easy to eliminate this by soaking thin slices of the stems in ice-cold water for an hour or two, or by boiling them in two or three waters, as is often done with strong-flavored vegetables. The author of the Bulletin, who has been experimenting for eight years with udo on his Maryland farm, suggests the three following recipes as samples of what can be done with the vegetable:

Udo on Toast.

Peel the shoots and drop them into cold water. Cut them into 4-inch lengths. Boil them in salt water for 10 minutes, then change the water, adding a fresh quantity of salted water and boiling until quite soft. Prepare a white sauce, such as is used for cauliflower or asparagus, put the udo in it, and allow it to simmer until thoroughly soft. Serve on toast in the usual way. If there is too much of the pine flavor, as there may be if the shoots are not thoroughly blanched, a second change of water will remedy this.

Udo Salad.

Peel the shoots, cut them into 3-inch

lengths, and then split them into thin shavings, letting these fall into ice water as they are made. Allow them to soak in the water for a half hour or an hour, so as to remove the resinous material in them. Serve with a French dressing of pepper, salt, oil and vinegar. Do not dress the shavings until just before serving, as they become stringy on standing in oil.

Udo Soup.

Remove the skin from the shoots. Cut in pieces one-half inch long and wash thoroughly in cold water. Cook until tender and mash through a colander. Add a pint and a half of milk, one-half pint of cream, two tablespoonfuls of butter, and one tablespoonful of flour, mixing the flour and butter until smooth. Season with pepper and salt. (Recipe for one bunch of udo; enough for five persons.)

Just how popular the udo will become is not predicted. It is desirable, however, that amateurs experiment with it for it is not at all impossible that udo prove a valuable addition to our table vegetables.

Colfax Gets Ample Water.

Artesian water has been struck at Glenwood Spring, six miles northeast of Colfax, on property which is leased by the city for a 99-year term. The opinion prevails that the water problem has been solved for all time. The artesian vein was tapped at a depth of a few inches less than 32 feet and the flow measures about 110 gallons per minute of cool, pure water. A pipe line is laid to Glenwood to tap the springs which recently became insufficient to serve the increasing population, and through this the artesian water will be pumped to the reservoir.

Don't forget that green bone is rich in phosphate of lime, an element of bone and eggshell.

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