

Colonial Farmer

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Editorial.

SHEEP.

Every year the importance of keeping sheep as a source of profit is becoming more apparent. There is a constantly increasing demand for wool, and at the present day there are a great many sheep owners among farmers that find it more profitable to dispose of the fleece, than to manufacture it into the various articles to which it is usually applied.

Sheep naturally require considerable room, more probably in proportion to their size than other animals. To crowd them together is to lead to deterioration, and it has often been observed that to confine them to stables and small yards, has the effect of making them dull and stupid. If its intended to fatten them, then these small places answer a very good purpose, but it is the very reverse for breeding ewes, having a tendency to render them plethoric, and when this predominates, where it takes the form of disease owing to other conditions the lambs are excessively weak, and should they live are of little value.

Sheep fed on dry feed during the winter months, should have access to water at all times. Salt also should be given them, not at such times as it suits the convenience of the individual, but placed in boxes where they may reach it, when they desire it. They will not take more than is good for them, nor be compelled when salt is mixed with hay or other food, to eat it when they don't want it.

The quantity of food consumed by sheep in cold weather, is estimated at about a pound a day for every thirty pounds they weigh. This is where proper attention to shelter and other needful care is given. How much more is necessary in cases where these animals are more or less exposed to cold and storms, is not stated, but the supposition is, that like all other exposed animals, a greater quantity is required, without producing as good an effect. Barley and oat straw, when cut green and cured, are favorites with sheep, while wheat is not so good for them, or rather they care less for it. Fine red-clover, if cut and cured while bright and green, is preferable to the best meadow hay, and if a proper allowance is daily fed to them in cold weather, they will fatten. It is capital food for breeding ewes, as it greatly assists in the secretion of milk; and it is of importance that when the lambs are dropped there should at once be provided a full supply of food for them.

Bran and shorts, mixed with a small quantity of grain are excellent for lambs or sheep. Some persons feed peas to breeding ewes to increase the milk and assist the growth of wool, with good results.

Regularity in feeding is considered of sufficient importance to need a word, as it has been ascertained by actual experiment, that sheep will do better on less food when regularly fed, than on a large quantity given at irregular periods.

Correspondence.

For the Colonial Farmer.
RURAL TOPICS.

WARTS ON HORSES.

A remedy is to dissolve three teaspoonfuls of blue vitriol in a pint of water; keep well corked; and apply with a feather, or small camel's hair brush, twice a day.

SORE NOSE IN SHEEP.

Sheep are frequently affected with a disease called "sore nose," being scabbed so badly as to interfere with eating. The remedy is to mix spirits of turpentine with soft lard or goose oil; half a pint of each, stirred well together while cold. This quantity is sufficient for one hundred sheep. In some cases it may need to be applied a second time. Rub it on thoroughly. Tar is sometimes employed, but of itself is very hard and stiff in cold weather.

CUT STRAW FOR BEDDING.

When farmers have facilities for cutting straw by horse power, it is advisable to cut the bedding for their stock, as it absorbs the urine of the cattle much more effectually than when it is uncut; it keeps its place better under them, mixes better with the manure, and decomposes quicker than long straw. Manure so mixed is in good condition to be used in the Spring, being easily spread, and better adapted for plant food than it is when in a day at least, because when the horse and cutter are at work it is best to keep them at work till enough straw is cut to last several weeks.

A CURIOUS CASE.

While ice is abundant every farmer

ought to have an ice-house, and fill it with ice for the use of his family; as it will cost very little to fill it with one's own team in winter, when, perhaps, nothing else would be done. It is not necessary to build an expensive one, nor to go below ground. A cheap house may be built as follows: Lay six sills upon large flat stones, say for a building 12 feet square inside when the filling is in, which should be from 12 to 13 inches thick. Suppose, then, you have sills 13 feet 3 inches long, which will make the building 13 feet 6 inches square on the outside. You then set up the studding, 2x4, about two feet apart, with 4x4 corner posts. The plates may be 3x4. You now have a stiff frame, all to be toe-nailed together. Next, place a 3x4 girder across the centre, spike to the plates, to keep the roof from pressing out the sides, especially when it is covered with a heavy body of snow. While you are about it, it is best to make a good job, if it is a cheap one. Next comes a double-pitch roof, with a good pitch. The siding may be of any boards you please, but the expense between hemlock inch boards and ordinary pine clapboards is very little; and besides, you want a building to look pretty well, if the expenses is no more than for one you are ashamed of. Probably a more suitable siding would be five-eighth inch pine, barn-boards, which are thin enough to allow a good lap. The doors are to be on the north side—two half-doors, so that the upper one may be opened while the lower one is closed against the ice. You now want to arrange for the inside packing, which should be sawdust, or straw. If the former, it should be about a foot thick; if the latter, eighteen inches. Light studding will answer for this purpose, against which sufficient boarding should be nailed to keep the sawdust or straw, in its place. A loose floor should be laid, resting on any old timbers a few inches from the ground, and when the packing is in you are ready for the ice. Such a building as I here roughly sketch can be built as well in the winter as in the summer. The ice should be cut with a cross-cut saw, with one handle removed, first marking off the ice in blocks two feet square, a mere scratch to guide the saw. The cakes should be hauled out, after being cut, with a sixteen foot plank, run under them, and having a cable nailed at the end to hold the ice. Pile in the ice compactly in square blocks, and fill in all openings with broken ice, so that the whole mass will become a solid body in a few days. Cover the ice about two feet deep with straw, and have a small window on the west, or north end, as a ventilator above the straw.

Miscellaneous.

Apple-Growing in the North-west.

When any one contemplates planting an apple orchard, he should consult and advise with the wisest nurseryman in the neighborhood, and he has probably spent more time and money in procuring such selections as will succeed in your section, than you may be willing to do. Select such varieties as he may, in his wisdom, recommend. The next thing is to select the location for your orchard. It should in all cases be high, and dry, a natural swell without any wet leaks running from it. My judgment would prefer a northern slope for success. Lay off the ground square, making the places for the trees, at least 28 feet apart each way; young trees, say two or not more than three years old, from the grafts are more apt to live and thrive well than old trees. When the holes are all dug, and you commence setting, every tree is set in position should be set at an angle of 45 degrees towards the south-west, so that every tree scabbing on the sunny side. My impression is that the trees are killed by the hot sun in the season when the sap is in full flow. I think the top should be formed low, and great care should be taken that they should not be pruned too much on the side towards the sunshine, in order that the foliage should shade the trunk of the tree in the middle of the day in the extreme hot weather. No protection is necessary if we make proper selections of the varieties adapted to our latitude as recommended by our wise men who composed our State Horticultural Society. I never discovered that any protective was necessary except to keep the strong prevailing autumn winds from threshing off the large apples before they were fully grown. The destructive winds usually prevail in that season of the year from the south and southwest that do the most damage, and if I were going to plant any timber for the security of the fruit, it should be a few rows of the White Willow that will grow thick and tall and form a barrier on the south and west of the orchard that will prevent the fruit from being blown off prematurely. I prefer the willow to the cottonwood for the reason that no apple tree will bear fruit when the shadow of the cottonwood even reaches it. I have not discovered that the willow is so injurious to the bearing of fruit when set 30 to 40 feet away.

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When any one contemplates planting an apple orchard, he should consult and advise with the wisest nurseryman in the neighborhood, and he has probably spent more time and money in procuring such selections as will succeed in your section, than you may be willing to do. Select such varieties as he may, in his wisdom, recommend. The next thing is to select the location for your orchard. It should in all cases be high, and dry, a natural swell without any wet leaks running from it. My judgment would prefer a northern slope for success. Lay off the ground square, making the places for the trees, at least 28 feet apart each way; young trees, say two or not more than three years old, from the grafts are more apt to live and thrive well than old trees. When the holes are all dug, and you commence setting, every tree is set in position should be set at an angle of 45 degrees towards the south-west, so that every tree scabbing on the sunny side. My impression is that the trees are killed by the hot sun in the season when the sap is in full flow. I think the top should be formed low, and great care should be taken that they should not be pruned too much on the side towards the sunshine, in order that the foliage should shade the trunk of the tree in the middle of the day in the extreme hot weather. No protection is necessary if we make proper selections of the varieties adapted to our latitude as recommended by our wise men who composed our State Horticultural Society. I never discovered that any protective was necessary except to keep the strong prevailing autumn winds from threshing off the large apples before they were fully grown. The destructive winds usually prevail in that season of the year from the south and southwest that do the most damage, and if I were going to plant any timber for the security of the fruit, it should be a few rows of the White Willow that will grow thick and tall and form a barrier on the south and west of the orchard that will prevent the fruit from being blown off prematurely. I prefer the willow to the cottonwood for the reason that no apple tree will bear fruit when the shadow of the cottonwood even reaches it. I have not discovered that the willow is so injurious to the bearing of fruit when set 30 to 40 feet away.

Fence Posts top end Down.

A study of vegetable physiology led me to try several experiments many years ago, to throw light upon this question. The sap of moisture goes up in the sap-wood from the roots to the leaves of trees. I found if the post is butt-end down, the pores are open upward, and water can go up, and thus keep the post moist between wind and water, which must cause a rapid decay. It appeared probable that the pores were open only upward, and not downward in a tree. To test this, I cut a small maple sapling (two inches through), in May, leaving the limbs all on, and placed the butt-end in a pail of brine. In thirty-six hours the leaves were saturated with this brine, the taste of the salt being strong.

At the same time I had cut another maple sapling, and cut off the top branch, leaving the rest of the limbs on. After winding a cloth around the butt-end, to prevent evaporation, I placed the top end in a pail of brine, and allowed it to remain several days, but no brine had been absorbed at the top end. It had not penetrated the pores as far as the end was immersed in the brine, for the bark was scraped, there was not the slightest taste of salt to be found.

Miscellaneous.

Apple-Growing in the North-west.

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