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AGRICULTURE.

REPORT ON THE AGRICULTURAL CAPABILITIES OF THE PROVINCE OF NEW BRUNSWICK.

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(Continued from our last.)

The experience of the New Brunswick improvers is in favour of the opinions: *First*, that by good treatment the more delicate English and Scotch breeds of cattle may be well kept during the winter of these northern Provinces; and, *second*, that a greater profit will be derived from them after allowing for the greater attention, and for the larger amount and better quality of food they require, than for the native cattle kept in the ordinary way. Some have tried Ayrshires, some short-horns, some Herefords, and some Devons; and there is, as we find in every other country, a diversity of opinion as to which ought to be preferred by the Provincial farmer. From the opinions I have received on these points, I quote the following:—

We have a very mixed breed of cattle here, in which the Jersey, bears a considerable portion. We are now trying the Ayrshire breed, which promises to answer the circumstances of the country very well. The points to attain are dairy produce, ease of keeping through the winter, and to carry plenty of flesh on small bone. To bring about an improvement in these particulars, would be attended with the most beneficial results—first, as it enables the farmer to place his produce in the most disposable form, in a convenient manner, and at the least expense—and secondly, that a due attention to the breed of cattle must necessarily be accompanied with an improved mode of cultivating the soil.

JOHN FARMER, Charlotte.

The neat stock best adapted for this country is small in size. Hardy Canadian horses suit us best. Blood horses are useless.

ROBERT B. CHAPMAN, Westmorland.

As to cattle, I think your attention may be profitably drawn to the Ayrshire breed for dairy cows and fattening cattle.

ROBERT SMYTH, Queen's.

The best breeds of cattle for high land farms in this Province are I think the Devonshire and Ayrshire, they keep in better condition on common pasture than any other breed, and are good both for the dairy and fattening.

EDWARD SIMONDS, York.

Give the high bred cattle the same chance of feed and care in this Province as they do at home, and they will vie with them, as far as Sheep, Pigs, Durhams, Devons, Herefords, or Ayrshires are concerned. There is one point relative to horned cattle I wish to draw your attention to. No cattle will answer us that do not include milk and beef qualities combined in the one animal; and from personal knowledge, and from what I can read, no breed comes to this perfection but the short horned Durham. Take this year when hay is scarce, what are milk cattle worth to turn off as beef, and what will they bring at the low price? If they combine both qualities, butter is high and they will pay their feed, and turn off the young stock as prime beef; this still keeps up the dairy to its strength. Then on the other hand, when beef is high, butter is cheap, owing to the large quantity of inferior cattle kept for dairy purposes than cannot be turned off. By having cattle on hand that will yield both ways, you are sure to have animals of profit to meet any market. I know a breeder in the upper country, that got Herefords as beef; they turned in very well, but he says if he had his Durham grade, his dairy would be worth more at the high prices of butter, than the Herefords are worth altogether, and he thinks equal to them in beef. The Ayrshire stock is good for milk but lacks fat meat. When any other breeder of any kind of stock challenges the Durhams, they do not challenge them for both qualities, but only one, therefore you will have to keep two distinct breeds to compete with the short horned Durhams.

JOHN H. REID, York.

As for stock, I have had and seen some very good imported, and some that were bad; a change of stock is very essential to the farmer, but the same care and attention given to the natives of the climate will perhaps be as profitable.

ISRAEL PARENT, York.

Our cattle are of various breeds, a preference however is given to the Ayrshire breed, as being the best adapted to the climate and circumstances. The prevailing desire

seems to be to improve the quality of our cattle, horses, &c., not as formerly by the aid of animals imported from the Mother Country or the United States, but by the exercise of greater care in rearing stock, and in selecting in infancy the very choicest specimens for that purpose.

JAMES CAIE, Northumberland.

A good breed of stock is highly essential, and the Ayrshires have been found the best adapted to this climate.

JOHN PORTER, Northumberland.

To the old stock of Alderneys that have been in the country since the conquest of Quebec, have been added the West Highland, Ayrshire, and short horned Durham breeds, and also the Southdown, Cheviot, Leicester, and Teerwater sheep, all which have succeeded well.

DUGALD STEWART, Restigouche.

Among the above opinions there is a preponderance in favour of the Ayrshires, as best suited to the climate of New Brunswick and the circumstances of the Provincial Farmer. There are some families of Ayrshires which are constitutionally adapted both for the dairy and for fattening purposes. The same is the case with certain families of short horns, so that the combination of qualities insisted upon by Mr. Reid, may with care be secured in either breed.

For early maturity and a speedy manufacture of beef for the butcher, my own experience has lain chiefly among the short horns, and I am inclined to recommend this breed.—At the same time, where the production of human food only is concerned, the milk-yielding is a much more valuable and productive, than the beef-making quality. A good cow will give from the same quantity of vegetable food a much larger amount of food for man, in the form of milk, than a fat beast in the form of beef, however early he may arrive at maturity. In respect to this quality the Ayrshire generally exceeds the short horn, so that where milk is wanted, experience is in favour of the former breed. For profitable use among small farmers therefore, and as a manufacturer of food for his family, the Ayrshire is the more sure; for the beef raiser and rich manure maker, the short horn is the more generally useful. It is at the same time true, that some strains of blood in either breed combine both of these qualities or kinds of fitness in the same animal.

Besides the methods of personal observation and of inquiries made of individual farmers, there is another way of arriving at a tolerable accurate opinion as to the condition of the stock and dairy husbandry of a country. This is by ascertaining the average quantities of milk and other dairy produce yielded annually by a cow; and the average weights of different kinds of stock, and the prices obtained for them when sold to the farmer or butcher.

The Tables (A. & B.) inserted on pages 95, 96 & 97, are somewhat defective as respects these points, but they contain all the information I have been able to collect, and will not be without their use both as a record of the branch of husbandry to which they refer, and as point of comparison for the future.

The first contains the prices obtained in the different Counties for cattle of various kinds, and for sheep. The gaps in this table show how defective our present information upon this point is.

The second represents the average yield of butter and cheese from the milk of a single cow. It is a great defect in this Table that the average yield of milk is not also given.

1. Remarks on the first Table, (Prices obtained for Cattle, &c.)

On the Table exhibiting the prices of cattle I have few remarks to make. Of the qualities and prices of yoke oxen I have little experience, and I doubt the profit of using them in what may be called pure farming. For ploughing among stumps and stones, and for hauling timber in the woods, they may be superior to the less patient and quicker horse; but the farmer who owns an extent of cleared and stumped land, and attends only to his farming business, will not find time in the short seasons of New Brunswick to wait on the laggard footsteps of such oxen as I have seen at work in this Province. I have been told in the State of New York that oxen are to be found with a step nearly as quick as that of ordinary farm horses, and which will do nearly as much work. But such cattle, to do the work, require to be fed nearly as well as the horse, so that the alleged economy in feeding oxen, in comparison with horses, in this case disappears; and the advantage of feeding them into bad beef at the end of eight or nine years, and selling them for six or eight pounds to the butcher, is nearly all that remains to compensate for the loss of time which, with the best of them, the farmer must always experience. Where wages are complained of as being high, a very small amount of this time will exceed in

value the price obtained, after a series of years, for the worn out ox.

The prices of fat cattle obtained from the butcher are unfortunately not accompanied in this Table by the weights of the beasts when sold, so that they do not alone indicate very satisfactorily their condition or quality. There are three circumstances however which, independent of observation, enable us to form a very correct estimate of the stock feeding, or fattening branch of husbandry in the Province. These are—

1st. The very wide limits within which the prices of beef and mutton range in the market of Saint John, as shown by Table XVI. on page 85. Two meat markets exist—one, the farmer's market, in which beef and mutton sell at 1d. to 2d. a pound—another, the butcher's market, in which it sells at 2d. to 5d. a pound.

2nd. That the best of the beef raised stands the salt badly, and that the greater part cannot be converted into palatable salt meat at all.

3rd. That salt beef for the shipping, and which will stand long voyages, is nearly all imported—and that much of the highest priced beef and mutton sold in Saint John is brought across the Bay of Fundy from Digby and Annapolis.

These facts indicate very clearly, either that the mode of raising good beef and mutton is not understood, or if understood, that it is not generally practised.

The same state of things as now exists in New Brunswick, existed in Scotland, in connection with this branch of husbandry, about a hundred years ago. Cattle were killed at the end of summer and salted for winter use, because the stock of hay at the farmer's command was not sufficient to keep them through the winter months. The beef these cattle gave was so poor that it took the salt badly, was hard and indigestible, and kept badly in the brine. The best beef for the larger markets was brought from the English borders, and nearly all the salt provisions for sea voyages were obtained at English or foreign ports.

Now, the cattle are not killed in the autumn more than at other seasons. The present modes of husbandry provide winter food for all the stock the farmer finds it convenient to keep. When killed, the beef and mutton are now of excellent quality; large quantities of both are forwarded all the year through, to the southern markets, and it can be cured for the naval service, or for any other use.

This improvement is important in itself, and as it regards the comfort of those who are to consume the butcher meat now raised; but to the agriculturalist it is of greater interest to be assured that the new methods are more profitable than the old—that the system of feeding three sheep or cattle well, leaves more money in the farmer's pocket at the end of the year, than that of half starving six on the same food—and that the produce of his milk cows and the yield of his corn fields are augmented in an equally profitable degree.

The main alterations, as it appears to me, that the New Brunswick farmer has to make, in order to advance towards the more remunerative system of the modern Scottish farmer, in his stock husbandry, are the following: To give—

1st. Greater care to the selection and raising of the existing stock of the country—or to an improvement of the stock by judicious crossing with imported sires of purer breeds.—Either of these methods will be followed in the course of a few years by a marked improvement in the character of the cattle, and of their fitness—either for dairy or for feeding purposes.

2nd. Greater attention to the bodily comfort of the cattle during the winter. I have already alluded to the badly sheltered cow houses, with open crevices and apertures that admit cold winds and currents, to which the cattle are exposed during the cold winters of this climate. These are not only a cause of discomfort to the stock, but of a waste of fodder to the farmer. A warm, but well ventilated byre, or cow house, will make the same quantity of food go further, or if consumed by the same number of beasts, will keep them in better condition.

3rd. To adopt a more generous and profitable system of feeding. To effect this important alteration, several changes in existing practices ought to be more or less generally introduced.

a. The number of stock kept ought always to be somewhat less than the farmer can abundantly feed. In this Province, as in Scotland formerly, the opposite rule has very generally prevailed. The number of cattle kept over winter has usually been greater than the fodder in the farmer's barn could comfortably sustain. This is false economy, and profitable farming requires that it should be abandoned.

b. The cultivation of the turnip succeeds admirably in New Brunswick. In temperate and well ventilated pro-