On the Land

GENERAL.

When cows have to face cold and wet weather in winter they should be given a liberal allowance of hay. If this is done there is little fear of trouble of any kind.

The voracity of insects is as astonishing as their powers of reproduction. The daily ration in leaves of a caterpillar is equal to twice its own weight. If a horse were to feed at the same rate he would have to eat a ton of hay every twenty-four hours.

Weaning is a critical time in the pig's life. Probably more young pigs are lost or stunted during this period than at any other time. It is best for both the sow and pigs if the weaning is done gradually, covering a period of two or three days. When drying up the sow give her very little besides water.

In practical agriculture the method of applying chemical fertilisers should vary according to the character of the soil and the kind of crop. In general, it may be said that the heavier the soil and the deeper the root system of the plant, the earlier the manure should be applied, and the more liberal should be the treatment.

Many farmers are experiencing heavy losses, says the Wisconsin Experiment Station (U.S.A.), because they are using separators which are out of order, running the separator too slowly, or separating the milk too cold. As the result of numerous tests of skim-milk, it was found that in some cases losses of butter fat as high as 0.8 per cent. were being made.

Salt, when dissolving in water, lowers its temperature, so freshly-made brine is colder than the water employed to make this mixture. In this way butter is hardened where the water alone is not cold enough for the purpose. In making brine for butter-making about a pound of salt is dissolved in a gallon of cold water. In very cold weather it is necessary to regulate the temperature of the brine so that it is not too cold for use.

It has been found in the State of New York that an application of lime, about a ton to the acre, almost invariably benefits certain of the leguminous crops, lucerne in particular. In a bulletin of the Geneva Experiment Station are given some interesting results on the benefit of lime for lucerne. Of sixty-four fields, well distributed over the State, only eleven were successful without lime, and all except six were improved by the addition of lime.

There were moderate yardings of stock and a fair attendance at Addington last week. There was practically no change in fat cattle, but fat lambs and fat sheep were firmer in consequence of a demand for export. Store sheep sold better all round. Fat Sheep. Extra prime wethers, to 31s 3d; prime wethers, 19s to 26s; others, 15s 9d to 18s 6d; merino wethers, 16s 7d to 20s; extra prime ewes, to 27s 3d; prime ewes, 17s to 24s; medium ewes, 14s 6d to 16s 6d; inferior ewes, 12s to 14s. Fat Cattle.—Extra steers, to £16 10s; ordinary steers, £7 to £10 10s; heifers, £6 7s 6d to £10 7s 6d; extra cows, to £14 17s 6d; ordinary cows, £4 17s 6d to £8. Price of beef per 100lb, 23s to 37s 6d; extra, to 40s. Pigs.—Choppers, £3 to £6 13s 6d; extra baconers, to £3 19s 6d; heavy baconers, £3 10s to £3 16s; light baconers, £2 15s to £3 7s (price per lb, 5¾d to 6d); heavy porkers, £1 17s to £2 4s; light porkers, £1 12s to £1 15s (price per lb, 6d); medium stores, £1 2s to £1 8s; small stores, 14s to £1; weaners, 5s to 8s.

Prices for good quality lambs and fat cattle at Burnside last week showed an improvement on late sales, whilst the rates for fat sheep were on a par with those ruling lately. Fat Cattle.—190 head were yarded, of fairly good quality. There was a good demand for anything prime. Prime bullocks sold at £13 10s to £14 7s 6d; extra, to £17 10s; medium, £11 15s to £12 17s 6d; light, £8 10s to £10; best heifers, £12 5s; medium, £8 17s 6d to £9 10s; light, £5 15s to £6 10s. Fat Sheep.—3372 were yarded, the bulk of which was composed of medium quality wethers and ewes, with very few pens of prime sheep. Freezing buyers were not operating very freely, on account of the shortage of space at the works. Prime wethers, 23s 6d to 26s; extra, to 27s 9d; medium, 20s 6d to 22s 6d; light, 17s 6d to 19s; prime ewes, 20s to 22s; extra, to 26s 9d; medium, 17s 3d to 19s. Lambs.—700 were penned, consisting chiefly of medium-quality lambs, with a few pens of prime quality. On account of the small yarding, the demand was fairly keen, and anything prime sold exceptionally well, at a slight advance on late values. Prime lambs, 18s 6d to 21s; extra, to 22s 9d; medium, 15s 6d to 17s; light, 11s 6d to 13s 6d. Pigs.—67 fat and 16 store pigs were penned. Good baconers met with fair competition and realised satisfactory prices. Porkers had not the same attention, while stores and slips met practically no demand.

MANGE IN PIGS.

Mange, though a troublesome disease, is not difficult to cure. It is very contagious, and afflicted animals do not thrive or grow, no matter how well fed they may be. Mange (says an exchange) is caused by a parasite, which burrows under the skin, forming scabs and causing great itchiness. This makes the animal rub itself, until the affected part becomes very sore. It generally appears first on the thin-skinned parts, such as under the arm, behind the ear, inside the thighs, and on the back. When the disease is detected, all clean pigs should be removed, the bedding burned, and the wood-work of the stics washed or sprayed with a strong solution of carbolic acid. There are many remedies for this disease. An old one is to wash the pigs with soft soap and water, and then rub in well dry sulphur. After a day or two the pig may be washed and rubbed with sulphur again. Another remedy is to sponge the parts affected with a wash made of one part tobacco in 20 parts boiling water, after washing with soap and water. If there are many pigs to be treated, a very usual plan is to yard them all up into a small sty, and, with a spray-pump and mixture, wet them all well. A usual mixture to employ is one of the many sheep dips on the market. Bedding and walls may be disinfected at the same time, and the former burned. After being sprayed, the pigs should be kept under cover until dry, as in cold weather they may get a chill, or in hot weather may get scalded.

AVAILABILITY OF FERTILISERS.

The value of a fertiliser for crops does not depend on its total percentage of ammonia, phosphate of lime, and potash, but upon the percentage of those constituents that the growing crop can utilise. This is the point that a farmer has to look at when considering the efficacy of an artificial manure.

There are a good many substances that contain a high percentage of one or the other fertilising constituents, but the constituents are in such an inert form that they afford little or no nourishment to the crop. They 'analyse well,' but are bad fertilisers. A glaring instance of this class of substance is ground leather. It contains a very large percentage of ammonia, but decomposes so slowly that it has no right to the title 'fertiliser.' The plant asks for food and is given, not exactly a stone, but something nearly as hard.

With the present system of intensive cultivation, in which large quantities of expensive fertilisers are bought, the farmer uses the fertilisers to feed the growing crop or the rotation, and generally not with the object of permanently enriching the land. His object is to turn over his expenditure on manures quickly by getting it back with a profit by the increased crop, and therefore, as a rule, the modern farmer uses fertilisers that act on the first crop, rather than those which become available very slowly. He buys and uses manures for prompt profit, and not for posterity.

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