

In the Field of Agriculture

THE MARKETING OF MEAT

An important reason why farmers produce less meat than formerly is to be found in the system of distribution from producer to consumer that has grown up in this country, says W. J. Spillman of the United States department of agriculture. In most of the countries of Europe public abattoirs have been constructed to which farmers may consign their fat stock, the meat from which is then sold to the consumer without passing through the hands of an intermediate line of middlemen, each of whom takes his toll. In this country the farmer receives only a small fraction of the price paid by the customer. Enormous packing establishments have monopolized the business and there is little or no competition in buying the farmer's stock. The enormous fortunes that have grown up in this business in recent years show that the farmer has not been getting his share of the profits.

Again, the retail meat business as at present conducted in cities renders enormous profits necessary. Numerous small groceries, each with its independent delivery system, clerks, fixtures, etc., serve a few patrons scattered over considerable overlapping areas. Better organization of the retail business, whereby it shall be conducted in larger units, with well-systematized methods of delivery, are seriously needed. Such organization should greatly lessen the retail price of meats and at the same time permit the farmer to receive better prices. This would encourage greater production.

Private organizations for the systematizing of the retailing of meats, without public supervision, will not meet the situation. Such organizations have already grown up in the milk business, but instead of cheapening the product to consumers, or increasing the price of producers, they have converted the saving thus effected into exorbitant profits. Public abattoirs with public sale of the meat of animals slaughtered at them, have become a crying need in this country.

SILAGE AND BEEF PROFITS

The Indiana experiment station carried on a steer-feeding test last winter, in which the value of corn silage as a fattening ration was tried out. The following conclusions are interesting and valuable:

1. The addition of corn silage once daily to a ration of shelled corn, cotton-seed meal, and clover hay, re-

duced the cost \$1.83 for each 100 pounds of gain, and increased the total profit \$8.15 per steer.

2. The addition of corn silage twice daily to a ration of shelled corn, cotton-seed meal, and clover hay, reduced the cost \$1.83 for each hundred pounds of gain and increased total profits \$11.19 per steer.

3. The substitution of corn silage for clover hay in a ration of shelled corn, cotton-seed meal and clover hay reduced the cost \$4.35 for each hundred pounds of gain, and increased the profits \$17.97 per steer.

4. The more nearly corn silage replaced the clover hay in the ration, the cheaper was the gain and the greater the profit.

5. Corn silage produced a rapid finish on the cattle.

6. The silage used in this trial contained an unusually high per cent of dry matter, and was, judging from previous experience, more efficient for fattening cattle than silage containing a high per cent of moisture.

GREEN WINTER FEED FOR POULTRY

One of the essentials of winter egg production is green feed of some sort. The chief function of such food is to act as a digestive stimulant rather than as an addition to the actual food constituents of the ration. In recent years sprouted oats have been widely used by experienced poultrymen as a green food for poultry. Experience at the Maine station indicates that in order to make a satisfactory product the oats must be grown very quickly, and this requires plenty of warmth, moisture and sunlight. Where the right combination of these can be secured, oats may be satisfactorily sprouted for poultry feeding purposes.

At the Maine station use was made of a small room in connection with the station poultry plant. This room was provided with a three-inch pipe connected with the water-heating system. The back part of the room was partitioned off as a closet, enclosing the three-inch water pipe, in which shelves were built to accommodate three tiers of flats in which the sprouted oats were planted. The partition wall which formed the front part of the closet consists of glass doors, made from the regular storm window sash, hinged to swing open as an ordinary door does. These glass doors face towards the south side of the building which has a window directly in front of the doors. The dimensions of the sprouting closet are: Length, 9 feet, 3 inches; depth, 2 feet, 6 inches; height, 6 feet.

The place of shelves in this closet is taken by large, square greenhouse flats made of 7-8 inch stuff. There can be accommodated four rows of flats, three in a row, in the closet at one time. A number of holes are bored in the bottom of each of the flats in order to drain off the surface moisture which comes with the wetting of the oats. In this closet it is easily possible to maintain a temperature that does not fall below 70 degrees at any time. With this arrangement one is able to grow oats from 4 to 6 inches high in one week's time. The actual method of sprouting oats is as follows: Clean and sound oats are soaked in water overnight in water in a pail. The next morning the flats are filled to a depth of about two inches and put into the sprouting closet. During the first few days, until the sprouts have become a half to three-quarters of an inch long, the oats are thoroughly stirred and raked over at least two or three times during the day. This stirring gives an even distribution of moisture throughout the oats in the flat. When the sprouts are sufficiently long to form a matted mass it is not desirable to stir them longer, or to disturb them in any way to break off and injure the sprouts. The matter of prime importance in sprouting oats is to provide sufficient moisture. The oats should be kept quite wet. In order to do this it is found necessary to wet the oats three times a day with the ordinary green house sprinkling can. The oats are fed when they are from 4 to 6 inches in height. They are fed at the rate of a piece of the matted oats and attached green stalks about 6 to 8 inches square for each 100 birds per day. Break the squares into smaller pieces and scatter over the per. Fed at this rate, the oats will never cause any bowel trouble among the birds. It should be borne in mind that sprouted oats are not fed for their food value, but as a tonic and stimulative influence on the digestive organs. If oats are to be used as food they can be fed most economically not sprouted, but as a fresh, succulent green food during the winter months the sprouted oats have a definite value in the poultry ration.

FEEDING STANDING CORN STALKS

The United States department of agriculture recently sent out a bulletin warning farmers against permitting their cattle to eat the standing corn stalks in the fields. This bulletin also recommended that the cattle be kept out of the fields and that the corn stalks be fed only in the form of cured fodder. The claim is made that these uncured stalks contain elements that are poisonous to cattle, and it is pointed out that cows frequently die after being turned in the corn fields after the corn is gathered. The Iowa Farmer takes exception to some of the conclusions of this bulletin, and says that the matter of turning cattle into the fields after the corn is gathered is as old as animal husbandry and that the farmers of this country will refuse to take the government warning seriously. Admitting that it was doubtless true that cows do frequently die after being turned into corn stalk fields, it says that "deaths are usually attributed to what is known as murrain. This is not a result of the poisonous condition of the stalks

as we understand it but is caused by cattle partaking of a large volume of dry food such as husks, blades and stalks and then when real thirsty are given free access to the water supply. Bloating follows and death occurs in a short time. The preventive is to water the cattle before turning them into the field and permit them to remain in the field only a short time until they become accustomed to the new ration. The same treatment will prevent alfalfa and clover bloat. Dry murrain often causes death and is produced from an excess of dry material without sufficient moisture. The feeding of cured corn stalks is expensive and impracticable."

NO OATS IN THE HORSES' RATION

The Kansas experiment station has recently completed a three-year experiment for the purpose of determining the most economic yet satisfactory feed for horses in which oats played an important part. Twenty colts were purchased—ten grades and ten pure breds. These were divided into two lots, with five pure breds and five grades in each lot. For nearly a year the two lots have been fed the same sort of roughage—alfalfa, corn fodder and pasture. One lot has been fed oats every day and the other has had a combination of 70 per cent corn, 25 per cent bran, and 5 per cent oil meal. Each lot of colts has received the same number of pounds of grain. After more than nine months, the colts that had no oats were in better condition than the others and made a little better gain. The combination feed cost 20 per cent less than the oats. Those in charge of the experiment believe that the test proves that there is a great chance for saving in feeding over the old methods.

DANGER IN FEEDING LATE-CUT ALFALFA

A number of deaths of both cattle and horses, due to feeding late cut alfalfa, are reported from a great many sections of the southwest, says the Farmer and Stockman. About the time the last cutting of alfalfa was made a rainy spell of weather set in, and the late-cut stuff has not cured as it should. Some have been feeding this partly cured stuff directly from the field, with considerable trouble as a result. The hay is very heavy with sap and moisture, and animals seem to like it, but it is not good for them in its present partly cured state. A still greater death agency is alfalfa which has been frozen before being cut. This has been giving more than the usual trouble this fall, and yet some folks do not seem to remember that feeding it to anything except hogs is dangerous. If you have any of this, feed it only to the hogs. It will not hurt them, but it often will kill a horse or a cow in double quick time.

ECONOMY OF THE SEPARATOR

For a person keeping five or more cows, it is economy to own a hand separator. According to the Purdue experiment station, by using a cream separator there is a saving of \$3.50 to \$7 per cow per year, over the gravity system. Besides a more thorough skimming, the centrifugal separator produces a better quality of cream and a more satisfactory thickness, removes many bacteria and other impurities and produces a skim milk in good condition for feeding. If the separator is used, the milk should be separated while still warm, as the separator has its greatest efficiency if the milk has a temperature of 90 to 95 degrees F. A point to be remembered in the use of

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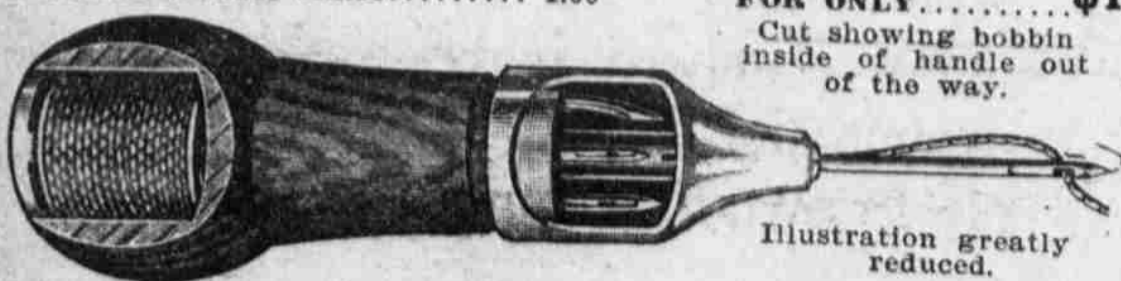


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