

The Flocks.

FEEDING SHEEP.

Results of Two Years Close Observation in the Yakima Valley.

BY ED. WELLEW.

When sheep are to be fed for winter mutton good results will be obtained in the following manner:

If sheep are near the feeding grounds early in the fall allow them to graze on an alfalfa field (or other good pasture) from about the 10th to the last of October.

Experiments have proven that where the alfalfa has grown to the height of from ten to fourteen inches results are much better and less dangerous than where it is smaller. If pastured on alfalfa, the first few days the sheep should not be allowed to graze more than one hour at a time, or loss will result from bloating; and it should be remembered that the younger and smaller the alfalfa the more dangerous. This fact seems not to be well understood by most shepherds, though experiments have proven it to be true. The last few days that sheep are allowed to graze in the fall they should be fed each morning and evening a small feed of hay, alfalfa being the best. At this time they should be kept as quiet as possible so as to accustom them to the quietness of the feeding corrals in which they should now be placed.

The corrals should be arranged to hold about 400 each; they should be about four times as long as wide and the feed racks placed along each side, the corral fence forming one of the feed racks so arranged. Allow plenty of room for exercise and no more.

If possible have a watering place at one end of each corral and always keep plenty of good stock salt near the water. The erroneous idea that sheep fed on alfalfa hay need little water or salt, should not be entertained by any one who hopes to receive profit from feeding mutton sheep.

In making the feed racks observe the following rules: Make the racks or boxes about twenty inches wide and four feet high; posts for these should be about eight feet apart and the boards nailed on horizontally. The first, or bottom board, should be eight inches wide and placed about two inches from the ground; the next one (any width will do) should be placed, for feeding lambs, eight inches above the first; for old sheep nine to eleven inches above. A pole or board above the second one will answer to keep the hay in.

Never drive the feed wagon in the feed yards if it can be avoided. Allow one linear foot for each grown sheep and eight or nine inches for lambs.

Do not feed sheep and lambs together

if the best results are to be obtained.

Alfalfa is the best for winter feeding, and experience has proven that alfalfa cut when the first bloom appears is from ten to thirty per cent better than when cut at any other time. The reason is obvious. At this time the plant contains its greatest amount of albuminoids; cut after this time it contains more crude fibre and less albuminoids. Alfalfa hay cut when in full bloom will yield more tonnage but the same field will not yield as much profit for feeding sheep as when cut as before stated.

Clover hay is very cheap feed but is not as desirable, as the yield is much less than alfalfa. Feed plenty of bright alfalfa hay. Wet or mouldy hay of any kind is not only of no value to mutton sheep but on the other hand will cause the sheep to waste good hay. Good results have been obtained from feeding alfalfa alone, but better results from feeding a few potatoes with it, and still better from feeding carrots instead of potatoes. Carrots and potatoes contain very little or no fat but aid in digestion. A very valuable feed is obtained by mixing a little straw with alfalfa. Sheep are fattened quickest by feeding chopped barley with alfalfa, but in nearly every case the grain is worth more than the extra weight produced.

They should always have sheds to lie under and should never be allowed to bed on wet ground.

Very old sheep are valueless as winter

feeders, and late lambs seldom net much profit when fed for winter mutton.

When no farm pasture is available the sheep should be taken from the range. It is represented that the rape plant makes the best fall pasture and in some parts of the east it bids fair to displace all other kinds of fall pasture.

NORTH YAKIMA, Wash.

FLOCK NOTES.

Drop the scrubs.

At Union, Or., a two set woolen mill is being erected.

Forty steam power shearing machines will be operated at Walton, Wyo., this season.

The American Sheep Breeder urges the use of shearing machines as a matter of economy in the production of wool.

A good many sheep buyers are in Heppner, Or., purchasing for eastern shipment. One man is buying 10,000 head.

The warehouses at The Dalles are preparing for the wool season. Z. F. Moody has received a carload of wool sacks.

More sheep and mutton are being fed in Nebraska at the present time than ever have been fed before in any state in a single season.

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