

THE FLOCKS.

Sheep men of the Northwest states are alive to the fact that sheep husbandry is destined to make great strides. Flocks will be doubled to meet the demand for wool and mutton. The flockmaster who goes to work to put his flock into the best possible shape to meet these demands, and to incorporate into it the most valuable characteristics of the breed he prefers, is the one who will reap the largest financial reward for his time and skill, and also the most satisfaction from his flock. Not a scrub or mixed blood ram should be used.

Sheep are manure spreaders rather than manure makers, and all depends upon the supplies given them. We feed them material from which they take their toil and give us back the remainder, transformed into a substance of almost equal value with that which they received, and they get fat, meanwhile, doing it.

The American consul to New South Wales reports a loss of 9,000,000 sheep in that province and estimates that the total loss during the year will not be far from 25,000,000. New South Wales has 56,000,000 sheep, and the loss of 25,000,000 means a loss of more than half the number of sheep in the entire United States. If this be true, and there seems to be no doubt of it, there is a very bright future in store for the sheep men in the United States for several years to come. The Australian countries have been our greatest competitors in the production of wool. Under favorable conditions they can produce the fine wool cheaper than any country on the face of the earth. Two great obstacles in their way are rabbits and drouth, and this year the drouth has been unusually severe, destroying not only millions of their mature sheep, but involving almost the total destruction of the lamb crop this season.

In Australia a very general and severe drouth has prevailed for a long time, and not a blade of grass was to be seen prior to the recent heavy rain which fell there, breaking the drouth. This rain came as a great relief, but it came too late to save the heavy losses of sheep and cattle, particularly the former. The mortality among sheep was very great, in some sections going up to 60 per cent., and the consequences will be that the wool clip will be short and prices must advance greatly on the fine grade of Australian wool. It will take a long time for the sheep industry in Australia to recover from the drouth, as almost the entire lamb crop will be lost this season, and those pulled through were so starved and impoverished that they are sorry-looking specimens of mutton, and will have a hard time getting back to their normal condition.

On January 1, according to the government estimate, there were in this country 38,818,634 sheep. Averaging the clip at six pounds per head, the domestic crop of wool for '97 is about 221,000,000 pounds. The imports for the year ending June 30, 1897, were about 330,000,000, which, added to the domestic clip, brings the total somewhat above what we annually consume, our average consumption being 520,000,000 pounds. The increase in flocks this year will be very great, but it will still leave much wool to be imported at a high tariff price; sufficient to insure the American grower a good price for his product.

Armour, Swift and other packers are speculating heavily in mutton. They have had their agents scour the ranges and take up thousands of sheep in anticipation of higher prices. Their actions have helped to boom prices.

The Wyoming, Montana and Dakota Sheep Breeders' Association has organized with live membership in all four states. Sheep belonging to this association range in north-eastern Wyoming, southeast Montana and both Dakotas. They have organized to promote the interest of sheepmen in this territory and propose to co-operate along every line that will benefit the fraternity. The officers are: President, John Lewis; first vice-president, David Willett; second vice-president, E. Wamsley; secretary, Felix Ashcroft, and treasurer, H. Frank Baur.

Prominent South African farmers have been very successful in destroying locusts by the use of Locust-Toxin, made from a fungus largely cultivated at the Bacteriological Institute.

A mammoth Rambouillet sheep with a deep chest, good quarters, and covered with a thick, long staple of wool from its nose to its toes is to me an ideal mutton and wool sheep,

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I have for sale 200 well-bred Bucks from the famous BULLARD family. The quality fleece from these animals cannot be surpassed in the Northwest, and they are of good mutton type.

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