

STOCK RAISING.

A Practical Discussion of the Subject by Gen. Johnson Hagood Before the Farmers Institute held in Winoboro 30th of October.

The discussion as announced, which I am invited to open to-day, covers a good deal of ground. "Stock raising" includes the farmer's association with all the domestic animals which may or should occupy the farm. It has an elaborate literature and its principles and practice find expression in many books. No thoughtful and progressive farmer will be without them. You are familiar with the general principles of breeding which experience has established and recorded; and interesting as is their consideration I shall make no reference to them in what I propose to say to-day beyond what is incidentally necessary to my subject. I shall confine myself to stock raising for profit in South Carolina.

Coming in contact with the facts of nature, the husbandman may co-operate with, he cannot successfully antagonize them. And when the product of his industry is placed upon the market, in these days of rapid and cheap transportation, the circle of competition is in our case practically the whole United States.

Let us see what there is in our locality and surroundings bearing upon stock raising from the standpoint we have selected for its consideration. Pastoral or range farming is practicable only when lands of little market value are to be had in large areas. In the extensive ranches of the Western plains the land costs nothing, no cultivated forage is provided, and the ranchman's care is chiefly confined to the annual round up when the young stock are branded and the marketable animals selected for sale. Notwithstanding the rigor of the climate and a pasturage that requires from fifteen to twenty-five acres to the cow, other circumstances that are more favorable have made the business a success; and its products are profitably sold throughout the country. Beef raised in Montana, and slaughtered in Chicago, is found fresh in the stalls of the butchers upon the Atlantic coast. In two sections of South Carolina this kind of stock raising is eminently practicable.

In the Alpine region of our northwestern counties are valleys for sheltered farmsteads and adjoining fertile lands for the arable culture which is necessary. Extensive ranges over adjacent mountains abounding in nutritious pasturage to be had at nominal cost. Good water, bracing and health-giving, is a mean of New Jersey or Kansas. Pure and abundant streams are on every hand. The movement and velocity of the atmosphere is below the average of the country at large, and in the frequency with which it is traversed by storm areas it ranks with the lowest in the United States. This region is a well known health and pleasure summer resort. Stock raising has, in all its history, had a successful experience in it upon a limited scale; and now that the Air Line Railroad at the foot of the mountains gives a market from Atlanta to New York, capital and enterprise may find here a field for extensive pastoral farming.

Again, upon our sea coast conditions occur which are favorable to this kind of stock raising. Sufficiently large areas are to be procured of cheap unimproved highland and swamp. The excellent natural pasturage is perennial-vegetation being checked by cold for only six weeks in the year. The winter climate is that of Nice in Italy, and in summer malaria is avoided upon the frequent sand ridges, or in settlements upon the seashore. The latter are summer health resorts even for people from the upper country. Railroads throughout this region give prompt and rapid transit to market, and when the location is upon the coast or on the numerous rivers and inlets steamboat service is had. Such opportunities as these are attractive attention, but the field is unoccupied to any extent. In my judgment success can but attend judicious effort in this direction.

For the remaining portion and by far the largest part of South Carolina stock raising upon the range is a thing of the past. In the early settlement of the country it had been the chief source of income to the pioneer. With increased population, and the occupation of the land by tillage, it had become an unprofitable nuisance; and the Legislature recognizing the fact wisely put an end to its sickly existence by the passage of the law requiring live stock to be fenced and not the growing crops. In this section fewer animals, of improved character, with careful and more or less costly attention are the conditions of stock raising. Can it be done profitably?

It is evident that among the plain factors in the solution of this question not the least are the breeds selected and the abundance and economy of the feed supply.

BREEDS.

South Carolina is a semi-tropical country. The products of the warmer and the colder regions alike grow and to some extent flourish within her limits. But the experience of her agriculture shows that the greatest success is met with in the culture of plants having their origin in the tropics. Indeed, transferred to her congenial soil and climate they have in many instances improved in quality and quantity of production. Indigo, rice and cotton, her staple crops for two centuries, have their origin and in the markets of the world have been preferred to those grown in their original habitat. The only hay I have known successfully grown for market in this State is from the Means and Bermuda grasses—the one of Egyptian, the other of East Indian origin. On the other hand wheat, oats, rye, cereals of a colder climate, upon lands of equal fertility do not produce as well here as further north. Indeed with rye and oats which are more than wheat a special product of high latitudes, there has been found but one variety of each which can be cultivated by us with uniform remunerative results. I allude to the red rust proof oats, which comes to us from Mexico, and what is known as Southern rye.

I am persuaded that this superior adaptability of our climate to plants of tropical origin extends to a considerable extent to animals derived from the same region. The mule, bred from a sire of tropical origin, is seldom found in the fields of northern countries, but is undoubtedly our best plough and wagon animal. No horse for light draft or the saddle

can compare for use with us to one that has a large infusion of thorough blood—the blood of the desert. General consent seems to have accepted the superiority in our climate of the Essex and Berkshire hogs over other imported breeds. Both of these owe their origin largely to tropical crosses. Of sheep, the broad-tailed and the Merino—the one of Syrian and the other of African origin—thrive most readily with us. And in cattle, Brahmin are the healthiest and hardiest of all the breeds which have been imported into this State. Our native or scrub breeds of cattle, sheep and hogs are of European origin and varied crosses. They have become acclimated through length of time and are healthy and hardy, but originating in the unimproved breeds of Europe existing at the time of their importation and neglected in their breeding here are inferior in many respects. Individuals among them have sometimes rare merit. The trouble with them is that of all conglomerate breeds the progeny is apt to breed back to some inferior ancestor as to inherit the merit of the parent. Propensity—the power to uniformly impress itself upon offspring—exists only with breeds long established and purely bred. The Brahmin cattle from their association with the religion of India have been kept as a pure breed longer than any other now known and they exhibit this power of propensity to a marked degree. I have seen the pendant ears, the straight hind legs and the general form conspicuously shown in an ox that I knew had but one thirty-second part of the blood in him. The broad-tailed sheep, which was the sheep of the patriarchy, and the thoroughbred horse going back of the crusades in his history, possess a like power of marking their progeny.

There is not a doubt of the superiority for many purposes of some of the modern European breeds. The difficulty is that in our climate they lose thrift and hardiness. The problem is to appropriate their good qualities without the care and long years required for a thorough climatication. This can be measurably done by crossing the imported male upon selected females of our native breeds; but can be better done by an infusion into the European breed of the hot blood of the long descended and pure bred tropical races. The grade is at once climaticated and renewed crosses upon the European stock and careful attention will soon give an animal equal to its European ancestor in all desirable qualities and at the same time naturalized to its new home.

These remarks apply more particularly to cattle. The Spanish Merino sheep for the wool is unequalled in any breed here or abroad. The broad-tailed regarded by many as the superior of all others for mutton, is a good coarse wool sheep; and both of these are at home with us without a cross. We all remember what a valuable hog for plantation purposes the cross of the Guinea upon our native stock made thirty or more years ago. I am persuaded now that the best hog for us will be from a new and direct infusion of tropical blood into some of the modern improved breeds. This cross comes to us through the Essex and Berkshire, but there is too much of the native English blood in these hogs. Long residence in a northern climate has toned down the tropical blood too much, and the cross itself needs climaticating for our use. I have for many years made my bacon economically and with due certainty by breeding Essex or Berkshire boars to native sows. The half breed was thrifty and healthy, a good plantation hog, fit for slaughter without extra care or attention at twelve to eighteen months old. In my experience for purposes of bacon a higher grade was no improvement. When early maturity was desired for purposes of sale as fresh pork, a second cross gave it, at the expense of hardiness. Pure bloods have in my hands been a failure for either purpose.

I know of no pure bred Brahmin cattle now in this State, and high grades are rare. Dr. Davis imported a cow and a bull into South Carolina in 1850, which he afterwards sold into Kentucky. I have seen in the columns of the old Farmer and Planter a statement from Mr. Eades, the Kentucky purchaser, that after six years successful breeding in which he sold near \$10,000 worth of calves from the bull, he sold the original pair to Mr. McHatton, of Louisiana, for \$4,200, something more than he gave Dr. Davis for them. He claimed for the grades not only the superiority for beef and work which is generally conceded, but also high milking qualities. I am aware that the claim to milking qualities is sometimes contested, but in my observation he is right. I once took from a twelve year old cow in one day without extra feed twenty-two quarts of rich milk. She was half Brahmin and half Alderney, and would have weighed, fat, fully one thousand pounds. The same cow bred to an imported Alderney bull produced a cow that approximated the Alderney nearer in reduced size and smaller quantity of milk. The Brahmin blood in that instance did no damage to the milking quality of the Alderney while it greatly added to size, symmetry of form and thrift in the cross-bred cow. Subsequent breeding into that strain has been to registered Jersey bulls and descendants now in the fourth and fifth generation still retain the superior symmetry and hardiness of the pure bred European animal; while in every other respect temper, style and quality of milk—the excellencies of the latter remain. The late Col. Frank Hampton of this State and Mr. Peters, of Georgia, each imported a Brahmin bull and these have been the only importations of which I am aware. Mr. Peters found in the grades the merit here attributed to them. A slight infusion only of the Brahmin blood is required to climaticate the breeds of a colder climate, exempting them from the murrain or malarial fever usually so fatal to such importations. That distinguished naturalist, the late Dr. Bachman of Charleston, is quoted as authority for the assertion that as little as one-eighth or one-sixteenth of the blood will accomplish its purpose. It seems to me the part of wisdom to cherish what remains among us of this blood—and I am satisfied that in cattle raising upon the range on the coast, the highest grade Brahmin bulls that can be procured with selected native cross would be the stock most promising of success.

FEED SUPPLY.

Between the coast and Alpine regions of South Carolina the country is divided by natural features into two marked sections. From a ridge water to a little above Columbia is the section of the long-leaved pine; from above Columbia to the foot of the mountains

the short-leaved predominate in the soil, and it is generally known as the Piedmont section.

In the pine section the soil is a light sandy loam and not well adapted to the usually cultivated artificial grasses, but valuable natural grasses are found. The early settlers kept up the Indian practice of burning the forests in the spring and autumn, which by keeping down the shrub undergrowth gave opportunity to these grasses; and the common to the whole State was here especially remunerative. Cattle were sometimes slaughtered merely for their hides and tallow, and the woods were full of them and of droves of half wild horses. Col. Mahan, a distinguished officer of Marion's Brigade, it is said had even after the Revolutionary war a horse ranch on the Upper Runs in Barnwell County, carrying over three hundred head. This pine region is now more especially the cotton region of the State. The forest pasturage is of little value; but the natural grasses remain, and the tillage that prevails finds its chief occupation in preventing them from smothering the arable crops. The Bermuda grass is naturalized, and on these soils affords unsurpassed pasture for early spring until near mid-winter. Highly fertilized it may be cut for hay, with extraordinary results. Dr. Laveland, near Charleston, succeeded from a highland meadow thus treated in obtaining near five tons to the acre, more than four times the average crop of the United States. The hay from this grass is in my observation preferred by stock to all others; and chemists assign to it a feeding value equal to the best Timothy. The Means grass is also a success for hay; and one of the largest grass farms in the South—that of Mr. Childs on the alluvial lands of the Congaree below Columbia—is devoted exclusively to its culture. His sales of hay have reached as high as \$10,000 per annum. These are the only two grasses that I am aware of which are suited to permanent meadows. These once set are difficult to eradicate, and with fair treatment give unvarying crops despite the vicissitude of seasons.

The crop foot and crab grasses are annuals requiring more or less cultivation and more dependant than either the Bermuda or Means upon farming seasons. The hay from them is highly relished by stock. As grazing grasses in the later summer when vegetation has been parched by prevailing hot winds are very valuable. The cow pea, belonging to the family of legumes, has been called the clover of the South. It is raised in the mountains and in the lowlands. Sown after the first grain crops are harvested—in June and July—it is as a self-seeding crop as the red clover; and harvested when the seed pods are half ripe, it affords a wonderful yield of excellent forage. Like all the legumes the difficulty in sowing it as hay is to preserve the leaves from crumbling. I have found the best plan to be to take and cock immediately behind the mower without submitting the cut vines to the usual sunning. The cocks are about the size of a hair hoghead and remain in the field a week, being once turned over upside down during that time. In haling in, the cocks are opened and aired for half-hour or so before loading, and then packed away in a house or stacked, using from two to three quarts of salt to the ton. If stacked, they should be well capped with corn blades or with some long grass, to make a rain proof thatch. These, with the cured blades from Indian corn and the straw from the small grain crops are the chief reliance of the farmer in this section for dry forage. I am persuaded, however, that the silo is destined here in the near future to largely take the place of the cocks. The crops most suitable for ensilage are grown in the pine section more readily and in greater quantities, reducing the cost of the silo as well as demonstrating the value of ensilage. Another marked resource for stock food in this section is crops for winter grazing. The Southern rye, while its seed product is not extraordinary takes on the character of a most valuable winter grass. Sown in September at the rate of one bushel of seed to the acre, on improved land it is fit for grazing by December and affords a pasturage until late spring which will carry more stock to the acre than clover or Bermuda grass in the summer. The annual known as rescue grass is nearly as valuable for the same purpose. Wheat sown with either of these makes the pasture to be more relished by stock. Barley does not stand the heat so well; but sown in drills in October and supplemented by Egyptian and other millets in March gives a succession of soiling crops from early spring till frost that almost does away with the necessity of summer pasture.

This pine region seems especially adapted to root crops. The turnip, the groundnut, the chufa and kindred crops all flourish; and the sweet potato, the feeding value of which is accepted at half that of Indian corn, produces commonly two hundred bushels to the acre. Cotton seed, with the oil expressed, which pays all the expenses of preparation, gives more cheaply than from any other source the nitrogenous element of a food ration; and its hulls are now alleged at the experimental Stations to be a sufficient substitute for long forage.

Passing into the Piedmont region, we find available for stock feed all the resources above enumerated. In addition to these, the artificial grasses from Northern climates grow and flourish in proportion as you approach the mountains. They are cultivated with profit; but the tropical grasses, the Bermuda and the Means, with the cow pea, maintain their superiority in economy and certainty of production. The lucerne, too, finds here a congenial soil. The crop of the late Col. Hammond's Hand Book of South Carolina to have given ten cuttings in a year—each cutting averaging two and a half feet in height. This grass requires very rich land for its results; but the rate of production indicated is so enormous and its feeding value is so high that, taken with the further fact that once set it lasts for twenty years, rich plots should be devoted to it on every farm.

There is a further difference between the Piedmont and the Pine country. In the latter the swamps have heretofore been generally formed too low for profitable reclamation. Low land or natural meadows while occurring of valuable character in localities are therefore not common. High lands meadows, soiling crops, and the silo are the resources of the stock raiser. In the Piedmont country are to be found every where branch, creek, or river bottoms long devoted to Indian corn, than which no land is better

sited to meadows. From such a meadow of seventy-five acres set in Bermuda grass I have taken for the past twelve years an average of two and a quarter tons per acre unfertilized save by annual winter and occasional summer overflows. The present crop from favorable seasons appears to be the largest yet harvested. I say appears; for it is not yet all cut to the market, and the weights are for thoroughly cured hay which has been in the barn for six or more weeks, and are taken from accounts of sales. I will add in passing that the drawback upon these meadows having the grass muddied by the occasional summer overflow, is obtained when such trouble occurs by running through a machine consisting of a whipper and fan arrangement, at a cost of about sixty cents per ton. Another difference not so favorable to the upper country presents itself. The pine country from its level character has suffered less washing of the soil under the clean culture of the present century; its highlands are nearly all arable. In the Piedmont section galled and gullied hillsides occur on nearly every farm. Once fertile, I see but one reclamation for these hillsides; and that is in Bermuda grass and the hoof of sheep, which the Spaniards say is golden. The creeping and clinging character of this grass will do much to hold the soil together and even aid nature in filling gullies which the ill advised hand of man has made. Terraces, when a larger practice has settled upon an effective mode sufficiently cheap, will complete the work.

Before quitting the subject of feed supply let us glance for a moment at the cereals in South Carolina. I have said that upon lands of equal fertility there are in regions further north. Of wheat, I believe this to be true without qualification; no variety to my knowledge has been introduced specially adapted to our climatic needs; but of oats and rye the remarks was qualified. The characteristic of the Southern rye has been indicated; and it may be a fancy of mine, but it seems to me these characteristics are best maintained in all parts of the State when it is grown from seed obtained below Columbia. Fond of horses from my youth, and anxious to secure a home supply of oats the best grain upon which they are fed, I had faithfully tried and had abandoned the crop in the pine region. It failed me in the late season. I was brought to my attention by the first proof oats then just introduced from the South West and Abbeville County, and I have since never been without a sufficient supply. Under ordinary fair culture, the crop of the State ranges from twenty-five to fifty bushels to the acre. With higher fertilization and more care, seven-five to one hundred bushels are commonly attained in different sections, and Col. Wylie, of Lancaster, is recorded under special circumstances of high culture to have reached a yield of one hundred and eighty-one bushels to the acre. The local history of Indian corn—that queen of cereals—is still more interesting. The first colonists unused to its consumption and looking upon it with contempt as the food of the savages whom they encountered, took slowly to its culture. Since then, though it has become with us the chief food both of man and beast, in the rivalry with our valuable market crops it has been sorely neglected. Planted without manure and generally on our poorest lands, the average yield per acre has been low, and only the area given to it has enabled the supply to approximate our needs. Yet strange to say, the largest crop of this world wide cereal and upon which more human beings are said to subsist than upon any other save rice, was grown in South Carolina. The crop of Dr. Parker—two hundred bushels and twelve quarts—is authenticated beyond doubt, and was grown by the help of irrigation, upon a branch bottom underdrained and highly fertilized. With a view to exhibiting the possibilities of Indian corn under improved culture the State Department of Agriculture has offered a prize of five hundred dollars for the best acre grown during the present year. The contest has not yet been decided, but the competitors are numerous, and results when announced will be hardly credible to those who accept the census returns as limiting the capacity of the State in this production. I have heard of one crop already harvested of over one hundred and thirty bushels upon land which a few years ago cost to the owner six dollars per acre.

THE REASON WHY.

With this necessarily incomplete exhibit of the resources of the State for stock feed and considering its climate requiring but three to four months of winter care, the question obviously occurs why stock raising is not now, as it was in the past, her chief rural industry. It is answered best by asking another question. Why are live stock raised at all for sale? Agricultural products with few exceptions cannot be sold profitably from the farm. Their perishable nature and small value in proportion to bulk forbid it. Further in their crude state the supply is far beyond the demand. To utilize them profitably they must be condensed and converted into other values at home. Live stock do this; and in fact is found the sole reason why a farmer produces them to the extent beyond his own need for the use and consumption of his family. With the introduction of cotton our farmers were supplied with one of these exceptional agricultural products. Cotton in the case of preservation, facility of transportation, and extent of market surpasses any crop that is grown. It can be sold in the seed, at the gin, at the railroad station, or at the sea port; by the handfull, by the single bale, or by the thousand; and every where it is as promptly converted into gold at current rates as is the note of a solvent bank. It is sown in April and sold in October; crops fed to live stock in most instances are not realized under three or four years. When ready for sale cotton may be kept at the cost of storage; live stock ready for market, if withheld, requires care and maintenance, and unless a character for which there is a general demand the purchaser has to be looked for. Fancy articles bring fancy prices when sold; but the farmers of average sellings needs to produce what sells promptly at reasonable and steady rates. We thus see why cotton has superseded live stock as a principal production of Carolina farm, and can appreciate the tendency to run to its exclusive growth. To throw it away would be to throw away a pearl richer than the whole tribe; to rely upon it

solely is equal folly. Neither man nor the land can live by cotton alone. In successful developing this great blessing of our soil and climate we have suffered by its abuse, and find hat in this as in most things we go safest in the middle.

Popular speech has boiled down our experience in the phrase that we "live best who live at home"—who raise at least our own supplies, and send cotton to market as the exponent of profit.

EXTENT OF STOCK RAISING.

But the general economy of mixed husbandry is not our subject to-day. We are inquiring to what extent stock raising with us may be profitably entered into such a system; and when, if at all it may supersede it. We have seen that in the mountains circumstances indicate success for extensive stock farming of a pastoral character. A like condition of things presents itself on the sea coast, although with the facility for market gardening in that region, the combination is obvious. Individuals anywhere in the State, but more especially in the Piedmont section, may and now do devote themselves to exclusive stock farming with pure bloods for breeding purposes. In skillful hands and with sufficient capital to await the returns from stock raising of limited demand profit ensues, high prices make up for slow sales. The thoroughbred must precede the grade, and with the increasing attention to improvement throughout the State at large the market for such animals is becoming more extended and more constant. Such farming it very attractive. It is the poetry of stock raising; its rivalries and triumphs are the features of our cotch shows; those engaged in it contribute to a public good, and I very much doubt if the exhibit they make, at our annual State Fair is surpassed elsewhere in the cotton States. But for the average South Carolina farmer, taking into consideration all his surroundings, stock raising for profit must be generally mixed husbandry in which it will have more or less development according to locality. When alluvial lands are had with their perennial meadows needing fertilization only from our plow, with the care of the enclosed swamps for natural winter pasturage, and broken hillsides for summering live stock may predominate in the system, and the level lands only be given to arable culture. Even here cotton will be found the best crop with which to realize the manure which enters largely into the income from stock raising. In unexpected limitation upon stock raising may arise. If the facilities for marketing the hay be good, at the prices for which it sells in our town and city markets it will be found that an article of best quality cannot profitably be fed to animals intended merely for the shambles. Under such circumstances for many years hay has brought at the barn from 16 to 20 dollars per ton, making it a market crop superior in net results to cotton. But these facilities do not always exist. Hay cannot bear transportation by highway, and local railway freights will soon eat up a car load that has to go any distance to be sold. Each one must necessarily determine for himself, unless his special surroundings, the minimum of stock his farm should carry in a mixed husbandry. He will find that care and quality will pay better than number and neglect. He must also determine the kind, whether horses, hogs, cattle or sheep to which prominence should be given. Most generally it will be found that these supplement, rather than interfere with each other. When a pasture or farm can carry no more cattle, a not inconsiderable number of sheep may be added without disadvantage, and hogs will do well upon what neither sheep nor cattle consume.

SOUTH CAROLINA'S EXPERIENCE.

I do not under the present system of labor find it desirable to make bacon beyond what is required for family use. So many pounds is part of the wages of the laborer, and he is satisfied with the coarser and cheaper western bacon. Better results are obtained from the hog crop by selling it on foot at from eight to twelve months old for fresh pork.

With sheep my attention has been mostly given to the lamb market. Broad tails graded on natives have for the purpose done best with me. A cross of the broad tail upon the down sheep—both sheepshire and south down—has been tried. The cross bred were smaller than the grades, less prolific, and no improvement in the mutton; certainly better prices were not obtained. Before the stock law was passed, where scrubs were more abundant than at present, I tried purchasing them in February when poor and cheap, and after summer and fall feeding on natural pasturage and the refuse of summer crops, sending them to the butcher. The plan met with some success. Mr. Stirling tells me that he now buys Florida cattle and feeds them successfully in like manner upon the natural swamp pasturage on the Congaree. Afterwards I undertook breeding with some care grades for beef. This proved unprofitable; western beef could be put in our own markets cheaper than I could raise it. Now, my reliance with cattle is upon the dairy, and raising calves of high grade. The steers are sold for work oxen, readily commanding good prices; and the surplus heifers when I have them will be offered as milk cows. I have never raised horses of common breed. They cost as much as those of better blood, and neither for use nor sale are as remunerative. Horses for light draft and the saddle blood have proved successful in my horses, meeting with ready sale and sometimes high prices. With mules the difficulty has been scarcity of good jacks, the size and value of the mule depending more upon the jack than upon the mare. This is a trouble, however, that can be remedied. The mule is in more general demand than any animal we can raise, and profit most certainly attend any well directed effort at breeding him.

CONCLUSION.

Your attention has been occupied longer than intended; what has been said I trust will elicit from others views perhaps more valuable, and results derived from a wider experience. There is no subject of more importance to us as farmers.

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