

Farmer's Column.



"SPEED THE FLOW."

Cooking Grain for Animal Food.

In our country, in which mills are not as numerous as in certain portions of Europe, it has become a frequent practice to cook or steam the grain to be fed to domestic animals, but especially to cattle and hogs. It may, therefore, be worth while to inquire, without any prejudice for or against, into the advantages and disadvantages. Grain, if cooked, swells and absorbs a large quantity of water, amounting, according to the variety of the grain, from one and a half to three times its own volume. Oats and beans absorb the least, then corn barley and wheat next Indian corn, buckwheat and rye, which latter absorbs the most, or from two and a half to three times its own volume; consequently the bulk of the grain is just that much increased. If grain to be used for food is cooked, the water not absorbed should be poured off while yet hot, in order to prevent the cooked grain from becoming too slippery and sticky, and on that account unpalatable to the animals. Neither should the cooked grain be stirred. But as the superfluous water poured off has extracted nutrient elements—sugar, for instance—it must not be poured away, but be made use of as food or drink.

Cooking has essentially the same effect as soaking; it swells the grain, breaks the epidermis, and serves to facilitate the digestion, but does not offer any other advantages, neither does it increase the nutrient qualities, except in so far as it prevents all such grain, as is otherwise not thoroughly masticated, or not masticated at all, to pass through the digestive canal undigested. The disadvantages of cooking grain consists in the following: Cooked grain contains a great deal of water, is soft, does not call forth the full digestive powers of the animal, and consequently exercises a relaxing influence upon the whole organism. It favors the production of adipose tissue, and causes the muscular fibre to become loose, soft and spongy. Steaming has a similar or almost identical effect; only the grain steamed has absorbed and contains less water than the grain cooked.

Concerning horses, the cooking or steaming of grain is not advisable, because horses as a rule, masticate and insalvate their grain well enough, consequently the saving produced by cooking or steaming is very small, and does not compensate for the loss of muscular strength and endurance. As to cattle, a grinding or crushing of the grain to be fed is decidedly preferable to cooking or steaming, but in regard to hogs, the latter (cooking or steaming) probably offers equal advantages to an artificial preparation by grinding or crushing. In the winter, cooked or steamed food, provided it is fed while yet warm, causes an additional saving by directly introducing some heat into the animal organism, which of course, is not lost, and does not require food to be produced. But on the other hand, a saving of animal heat effected in that way does not invigorate the system. According to my own experience, everything else being equal, an animal, even a pig, raised on ground food (grain) almost invariably will do better, be stronger or more vigorous, than one raised on boiled or steamed food.—Cor. Chicago Tribune.

Shepherd Dogs.

It is said that a single shepherd and his dog will accomplish more in gathering a head of sheep from a Highland farm than twenty shepherds could do without dogs; and it is a fact that without this docile animal the pastoral life would be a mere blank. Without the shepherd's dog the whole of the mountainous land in Scotland would not be worth a sixpence. It would require more hands to manage a stock of sheep, gather them from the hills, force them into houses and drive to market than the profits of the whole stock would be capable of maintaining. Well may the shepherd feel an interest in his dog; he it is indeed that earns the family's bread, of which he himself is content with the smallest morsel; always grateful and always ready to exert his utmost abilities in his master's interest. Neither hunger, fatigue, or the worst treatment will drive him from his side. He will follow him through fire and water, as they say, in through every hardship without murmuring or repining until he literally falls dead at his feet. If one of them is obliged to change masters, it is sometimes long before he will acknowledge the new one, or consent to work for him with the same willingness he did for his former lord; but if he once acknowledge him, he continues attached to him until death; and though naturally proud and highspirited in so far as relates to his master, these qualities are kept so much in subordination that he has not a will of his own.

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