

MONEY FROM SHEEP

THE raising of sheep is an industry that is only now coming into its own. This valuable little animal has long been neglected, but anybody who has a little land that might be used for grazing purposes and has no sheep is overlooking a good opportunity.

While experience proves that there is no class of live stock that may mean greater profit, yet there are many flocks of sheep kept at a loss, or at least without proper returns. This is because so many farmers fail to appreciate the need of up-to-date methods in breeding and care.

Many farmers have an idea that the main purpose of sheep on agricultural lands is that of a scavenger, and hence it is not good business policy to invest in well-bred animals, as any common sheep will eat weeds and other things of similar value. An analogy to this case may be cited in that it was only a few years ago that the old long-horned Texas cow was thought to be the most profitable to consume the cheap grazing of the ranchman. The most successful cattle men today are those who have improved their stock by the use of the best sires obtainable of the beef breeds.

Sheep will consume and turn into gold weeds, sprouts, and other things

on the farm that are worse than useless and which other animals would refuse to eat, but they also have a higher mission than this. No other animal will consume the best feeds that the farm produces with a greater profit in cash than will a good flock of sheep, and as a factor in maintaining and restoring soil fertility the sheep stands in a class by itself. European countries, England in particular, have long realized this, and on high-priced English lands the sheep has not only long been recognized as "the rent payer," but the landlord stipulates that a certain number shall be kept by his tenants in order that the fertility of the soil shall be maintained.

As the American population is rapidly increasing, and our acres of good agricultural land are not, it does not require much foresight to see that it is important not only to maintain, but to increase the producing capacity of our farms, as the time is fast approaching when they will be called upon to furnish the necessities of life for many times as many consumers as heretofore. As the prudent business man strives to keep his business capital unimpaired, so the wise farmer will do his best to follow a course of farming that means soil improvement.

The most successful farmers of the future will be those who will be able to "produce two blades of grass where one did grow" and two bushels of grain where one now grows. They will raise more grain on fewer acres, will raise grasses, clovers, alfalfa, and other legumes on a part of the farm. There is no class of animals that will consume these items and make more meat therefrom than a good flock of mutton sheep, and in addition they will annually produce a fleece which will nearly or quite pay for their keeping and finally will turn their residue into the best of fertilizer obtainable.

Of course the breeding of the flock is a prominent factor in success or failure. It is an important matter to select types of sheep best adapted to profit. If you start with grades, use only pure-

bred sires of a particular breed. Do not select a ram from one breed one year and one from another the next year, and expect improvement to follow, for it will not. However, the standard of a flock can be raised very rapidly by using good sires each year and culling out the inferior ewe lambs.

For best results lambs should be taught to eat grain as early as possible. Corn and oil cake in "pea" form make a very good ration. The lambs should be fed grain in a "creep," that is, an enclosure into which the lambs may pass, but whose entrances are not large enough to admit the ewes. The first six months of the lamb's life are the most important, and though they may have access to abundant pasture, yet whatever one may give them in the way of grain feed will be abundantly repaid by increased thrift and growth.

It is advisable to dip sheep twice each year, in the spring and in the fall. The spring dipping should be done soon after the shearing, at which time the lambs should also be dipped, as the ticks are likely to leave the ewes and get on the lambs after the former have been sheared. Any of the standard coal tar dips, such as kreso, zenoleum, etc., will prove satisfactory, though some shepherds prefer a sulphur dip. In using the coal tar dips, the best results are obtained by using solutions that are recommended in the directions accompanying the preparation. Dipping, remember, is the only practical method of keeping the flock safe from the ravages of ticks, lice, and scab.

If the above plain directions for caring and feeding the flock are observed, together with the selection of suitable breeds for existing conditions, it will be found that the profit in sheep will often be greater than from any other class of live stock. As to the permanency of the demand for sheep, at present it is increasing, and every indication points to a still greater increase. It is a good sideline business and worthy of the attention of everyone properly situated to handle it.