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 mis-
ion than this. No other animal will
consume the best feeds that the farm pro-
duces 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. Eu-
ropean 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 rap-
idly 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 fur-
nish 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 im-
provement.

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 le-
gumes on a part of the farm. There is
no class of animals that will consume
these items and make more meat there-
from than a good flock of mutton sheep,
and in addition they will annually pro-
duce a fleece which will nearly or quite
pay for their keeping and finally will
turn their residue into the best of ferti-
lizer obtainable.

Of course the breeding of the flock
is a prominent factor in success or fail-
ure. 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 en-
closure 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 satis-
factory, 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 prep-
aration. 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 car-
ing 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 in-
creasing, and every indication points to
a still greater increase. It is a good side-
line business and worthy of the atten-
tion of everyone properly situated to
handle it.