

On the Land

MARKET REPORTS.

At Burnside last week there was an average yarding of fat cattle, 250 being penned. The entry consisted principally of quality bullocks, with a fair sprinkling of prime cows and heifers. The sale opened briskly at equal to the previous week's rates, but as the sale proceeded a slight ease was noticeable, which became more pronounced towards the close. Quotations:—Extra prime bullocks sold up to £27 10s, show bullocks £32, prime £20 to £23, medium £16 to £18 10s, extra prime cows and heifers to £22 17s 6d, prime £16 to £19, medium £10 to £12 10s, light £6 to £8. Fat Sheep.—There was a short entry in this section numbering 1641. The proportion of medium quality sheep was smaller than usual, the major portion consisting of prime quality wethers and ewes. The market opened at about 2s above the preceding week's rates for prime quality, and firmed as the sale progressed. The average appreciation could be stated at 3s. Medium and light wethers were on a par with previous week's prices. Quotations: Extra prime heavy wethers made up to 59s 9d, prime 46s to 50s, medium 41s to 44s, light 36s to 39s, extra prime ewes to 51s 3d, prime 42s to 45s, medium 36s to 39s, light from 25s. Pigs.—An entry of 125 fats and 111 stores. Prices for fat pigs showed no great change from those of the previous week.

At Addington last week the fat stock market in connection with National Week was held. The display of fat stock, as a rule, is the best collective exhibition in the Dominion. To such an extent, however, has the entry been in excess of requirements at recent Nationals that prices have been depressed particularly in the case of cattle, and this experience caused a much less "classy" entry this year. Except for a small proportion of show bullocks, the cattle section comprised ordinary good commercial sorts. The market, however, was a "hot" one, quite the best since before the slump. Of fat sheep the entry was of average National class, there being a fine display of show stock. Prices were also good. Other sections, notably pigs, sold very freely.

THE BEST POULTRY FOODS.

It is a mistake to provide fowls with the same foods and in the same proportions throughout the year (says a writer in *Farm, Field, and Fireside*). Some meals and grains are suitable for summer rather than for winter use; others which are excellent during the colder months are not only unsuitable, but are positively dangerous during the summer.

The Best Grains.

Nearly all grains are readily eaten by fowls, but there are a few that are particularly suitable by reason of the valuable elements they contain and their easy assimilation. There is no finer food for poultry than wheat. This fact is pretty generally recognised by poultry-keepers, since probably no grain is more extensively employed. It is what may be termed an excellent all-round grain, being suitable for practically

all kinds of poultry at all seasons of the year and under nearly all conditions, besides which fowls are extremely fond of it, and never appear to become tired of it.

Barley is not extensively used for poultry, but during the colder months of the year its high proportion of carbohydrates serve the beneficial purpose of sustaining the temperature of the body.

Provided that a good sample of oats is obtained, there are few grains that yield better results. Oats are extremely well balanced, containing a fair percentage of the three essential elements. A good deal of difficulty is often experienced in persuading the fowls to eat them, owing doubtless to their hard husks.

Only well-filled oats are of any service to poultry, since the small, thin grains consist so largely of husk. It is an excellent plan to steep the grains in water for a few hours previous to feeding, as in this manner they are rendered more palatable and more easy of digestion.

The Value of Maize.

There are two reasons why maize is so extensively used for poultry. One is that it is generally fairly cheap, and the other is that fowls eat it so readily. Save with two exceptions, however, there is no more unsuitable, and in the long run dearer food, that is, when it is employed in its raw state. There are two, but only two, occasions when its use is to be recommended, namely, during cold weather and to sitting hens.

During a spell of frost, or when there is a keen wind blowing, a little maize mixed with other grains is beneficial, about one-fourth maize, to the remainder wheat or oats. To sitting hens, too, it should be supplied, because while a hen is broody she is in a mild fever, the temperature of the body being a few degrees higher than under normal conditions, and thus a heating food assists very materially in keeping up the bodily temperature.

These are the only two occasions when raw maize is beneficial; at all other times it should be avoided. Maize is extremely strong in the heat-forming element carbohydrates, and thus goes to the production of fat rather than eggs or flesh. The appearance of a maize-fed bird is probably familiar to many readers; the carcass is entirely coated with a layer of oily, greasy fat, useless as a food and harmful to the bird. Cooked maize is a suitable food, but in a raw state it requires to be employed very carefully indeed.

The Smaller Grains.

Of the smaller grains, chiefly of value in the formation of a dry chicken mixture, there is a great variety. Buckwheat, canaryseed, hempseed and millet are the most commonly employed, and all, with the exception of canaryseed, are comparatively low priced. Buckwheat is extensively used on the Continent for all kinds of poultry, particularly turkeys, but in this country it has never become at all popular.

Rice is extensively used by the "duckers" in the counties of Buckinghamshire and Bed-

fordshire, where it is regarded as the finest food there is for fattening purposes. It is, however, almost useless as a food in a raw state, since it is very indigestible and badly balanced.

For cooking purposes the common chicken or Burmah rice should be used. To one part of rice three parts of water should be added, and the two allowed gently to simmer on a fire till the rice has absorbed all the water, which it will do in a few hours. The only use of raw rice is for assisting in the formation of a dry chick mixture, and its badly-balanced proportions are rather of use than otherwise, since it counteracts some of the other grains.

The Best Meals.

Middlings and bran are the chief meals employed for feeding to poultry. Middlings is the most widely-used poultry food there is, being employed upon almost all and every occasion. It is rather deficient in carbohydrates, and when used alone it is more suitable for summer than for winter.

For fattening purposes ground oats is unrivalled, producing an abundance of fine-quality flesh of an excellent color and flavor. All the best Surrey and Sussex chickens are fed upon ground oats mixed with soured skim milk, as the fatters consider no other food to be equal to it for the purpose. It is also useful for feeding to growing and laying birds assisting very materially in their development and laying.

It is an extremely finely-ground meal, almost resembling flour in its consistency. The husks are ground up as well as the kernels, especially prepared millstones being employed.

Oatmeal is frequently confounded with ground oats, but the two are quite distinct from one another, since oatmeal consists of oats with the husks removed. Oatmeal, either raw or cooked, is very valuable for young chickens, but it is rather too expensive for common use. One feed a day supplied to chickens that are not thriving particularly well is very beneficial, and quickly gives added health and vigor. When used in a dry mixture it should be given raw; at other times it should be thoroughly soaked in boiling water until every particle is well swollen out.

Maizemeal, like the grain, is suitable only for winter use; at other times it should be used very sparingly indeed, or else avoided altogether. The chief value of bean meal lies in its flesh and egg-forming qualities, as it is extremely rich in albuminoids—the element that goes to the production of eggs or the formation of flesh.



H. M. BENNETT

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