

[CONCLUDED FROM PAGE 1.]

lover of ham, never gets such meat as ours, unless it is cured in the same way. There is but one way to have this first-class bacon, and that way is the one herein portrayed. Such ham as ours is worth its 18 and 20 cents per pound in the Buenos Ayres or London market.

Our next and final step is to show how to preserve our bacon nice, good, and clean of the "skipper" through the summer and autumn. This will not detain us long.

THE SMOKE HOUSE—THE "SKIPPER."

The meat house or smoke house, as it is commonly called in Virginia, is usually a tall frame structure, 10x12 or 12x15 feet, ground plan, underpinned solidly with brick set a foot or more into the ground, or with a double set of sills, the bottom set being buried into the soil. This mode of underpinning is designed to prevent thieves from digging under and into the house. Stuntinch boards are used for the weatherboarding, and sometimes the studding are placed near enough to prevent a person from getting through between them, another precaution for keeping out thieves. The house is made tall to give more room for the meat, and to have it further from the fire while smoking.

The weatherboarding and the roof should be tight to prevent too free escape of smoke. No window and but one door is necessary. The floor should be of clay, packed firm, or of brick. There should be room for one or more platforms on which to pack meat, and there should be a salt barrel, a large tray in which to salt and a short, handy ladder for reaching the upper part of the room. A large basket for holding chips and a tub for water are necessary while the meat is being smoked. For the convenience of the housewife there ought to be also a large chopping block and a meat axe for cutting the meat into the required size for cooking. Nothing not required in the care or handling of the meat should be allowed to cumber up the room and afford a harbor for rats, or present material for a blaze in case a spark from the fire should snap out to a distance. The house should be kept neatly swept, and rats should not be allowed to make burrows under anything in the room.

Another important item in relation to the house, as it goes far to keep out the dermestes (parent of the "skipper") from the bacon, and that is, have the floor of the room made of stiff clay, firmly packed throughout. The "skipper" undergoes one or two moultings while in the meat, and at last drops from the bacon on the floor, and if the soil is soft and yielding, buries itself into the ground, where it remains all winter, and comes out a perfect beetle in spring. The hard floor will prevent its doing this, and compel it to seek a nesting place elsewhere.

In case the floor of the smoke house is soft and yielding, it is well each winter before the meat is packed to salt, to have about two inches of the soil taken up and carried out to the field and fresh soil put in its place. Better still, make the floor hard with clay. Even this, however, will not prevent the larva of the bacon bug from finding a safe hiding place, and is only mentioned as an important preventive measure.

With a hard floor to the room, and the room swept often, and by the use of plenty of black pepper on the meat, there ought to be very few bacon bugs present any one season, and consequently not enough "skippers" in any of the meat to render it at all objectionable.

Bacon keeps nowhere else so well as in the house where it is smoked, and if the bug does not get too numerous, it is decidedly better to let it remain there than to pack it way in close boxes, in oats, in bran, or in anything that has even been suggested. Bacon needs air and a cool, dry room to keep well in summer. The least degree of dampness is detrimental. Cloth or paper sacks exclude the air and injure the flavor. So long as the bug can be kept within bounds, let the meat hang in the house where it is cured.

As many, however, will prefer to exclude the bug entirely, the following device is offered as a safe, cheap and satisfactory preventive:

After the meat is smoked, hang it all close together, or at least all the hams in the center of the house, and enclose it all around with a light frame, over which is stretched thin cotton cloth, and so let it hang all summer. This contrivance will prevent the bug from getting at the

meat to deposit its eggs, and it will at the same time admit the air. The bottom or one side of the frame should be fixed on hinges for convenience in getting the bacon as wanted.

As the bacon bug comes out in March or April, it will be necessary to get the meat smoked and enclosed under the canvas before the bug gets out of its winter quarters. A great many hams may be thus kept with perfect immunity from the bug as long as desirable, and will remain sweet and nice.

And now to recapitulate: To have good bacon we must start with the pig and feed for muscle and flesh, and not alone for fat. Spring pigs make the cheapest pork.

Very large hogs are not the best for first-class bacon. Always cure pork with dry salt, never in brine.

From four to six weeks is long enough to lay in salt. Smoke a bright gingerbread color with oak or hickory wood.

To prevent the "skipper," smoke early and afterward enclose the meat around with thin cloth stretched on frames.

The meat-house, if cool and dry, is the best place for keeping the bacon during summer and fall.

The Poultry Yard.

THE FARM POULTRY.

Correspondence of The Progressive Farmer.

Although many make a specialty of poultry, and devote their time exclusively to the birds, I feel convinced that the farm is the proper place for poultry raising, and that more can be accomplished in this way than on poultry places where nothing else is attempted. The latter is like putting all your eggs in one basket, while the former is like throwing a sheet anchor to the windward for a violent gale. Some day the poultry will fail us, and then if we are depending upon them exclusively we become bankrupt. But the farmer who raises enough food for his own table, has a few pigs for market, a few cows for milk and butter, and a horse to do general work, with hay and corn to feed him on, is not totally lost when a bad season for poultry comes. He can weather the storm, and if he owns his own farm he is not likely to abandon the work simply because one season has proved disastrous.

More than this, the farm seems to be the natural place for the poultry because every crop we raise contributes directly or indirectly to their support. You cannot raise corn or hay for the cattle or horses without producing a large amount of waste product which the hens alone can eat and profit thereby. The seeds of the grass, the waste of the corn field, and the broken heads of wheat and oats are all appreciated by the hens. The milk which the cows give also provide food for the poultry. The sour milk or the butter milk mixed with bread crumbs and scraps from the table are excellent for the chickens. The cows thus furnish distinct food for the poultry that would otherwise be wasted.

Then again the orchard and the garden furnish illimitable supplies for the poultry, and mostly in the form of waste products; that is, all the waste parts of fruits and vegetables can be fed to the fowls in one form or another. I have yet to find anything from garden or orchard that cannot be fed profitably to the chickens either in the green natural form or cooked and mixed with other foods. Fruits and vegetables are sure to attract worms, bugs and insects, all of which the poultry need and relish. None or very few of these things can be raised on the poultry farm that is distinct from a farm, and is intended for poultry alone. The farm is the place for the poultry, and one possessing such a plant is in a fair way to increase the profits on poultry much better than another who starts in with a poultry plant built primarily for this and no other purpose.

ANNIE C. WEBSTER.

FEEDING.

It is very doubtful, in my estimation, whether a better food for chicks as well as for older fowls could be found than whole wheat. And it is comparatively a cheap food, too, so long as we can get best quality at about seventy-five cents a bushel, and second grade at from fifty to sixty cents a bushel. Sometimes I have wheat almost an exclusive ration for young chicks for weeks at a time, besides what seeds,

bugs, worms and green stuff they could pick up on a free range, and I have always been pleased with the returns. Chicks fed on whole wheat grow quite fast. This spring I have not had the wheat to feed, and my hens did only moderately well in laying. For a few weeks now I began feeding wheat again, both to the young and the older stock, and hardly had I begun this when the little chicks began making a much more rapid growth; and how the hens do shell out the eggs!

A certain "Stock Food Co." writes a private letter, saying that "we have the best stock food on the market, and are about to add a poultry food to our line, and, of course, it must be the best, also. Send us the formula for what you believe to be the best poultry food, and we will send, express prepaid, a pound package of our celebrated X stock food. To the one sending the best formula we will give \$5 in gold." I have not much use for these various patented preparations sold in one to ten pound packages at a high rate. There is nothing mysterious about stock feeding. It will be very hard to find a better single food for poultry than good whole wheat, with occasional changes to oats, corn or other grains. We have to supply certain elements in certain proportions, in order to supply perfect nutrition. The patented "poultry foods" are not properly foods, but belong to the category of condition powders. I am not spending much money for them. —T. Greiner, in Farm and Fireside.

Live Stock.

PURE BRED AND GRADED STOCK.

Correspondence of The Progressive Farmer.

While there may be a difference of opinion as to whether the average farmer should raise pure bred stock, I do not believe any intelligent owner of stock has any doubt about sticking at least to good graded animals. There are cases where it would hardly pay a farmer to stick exclusively to pure bred stock. I doubt if in the majority of cases it would prove profitable. But by constantly grading up the herd or flock by the use of pure sires we come as near pure bred animals as the conditions in most cases warrant. This is a policy that no one can neglect or contradict. If a man sticks to it he is bound to have stock that will in nearly every respect meet the demands of the day.

There are those who believe that the average farmer should raise only pure bred stock, and they fortify their position with arguments that are pretty strong. For instance pure bred cattle will sell higher in nearly every market, and even the beef that comes from pure bred cattle commands an extra premium. This of itself is a strong argument for the pure blooded animals. But there is a vast difference between scrubs and pure bred stock, and usually the comparisons of prices are made between these two extremes. A well-graded herd of cattle will sell nearly as well in any market as the pure blood, and when the beef is offered for sale a good deal of it will pass as that from pure bred cattle. There is of course all the difference in the world between different graded herds. One man will consider that he is grading up his herd if he introduces a full-blooded sire once in every two or three years, while another will mean by graded stock that which has been raised directly from pure bred sires. The breeding to such sires must be constant and not occasional and spasmodic. If this is done there is little reason for any to imagine that there is anything of the scrub in the cattle, sheep or swine. The tendency of course is to start in all right, and after a few years of successful grading to fall back into old ways. When the animals have reached a point where they seem as good as any in the market, it is very natural to think that you can fall back upon some second rate sire for a season, and thus save a little money. But this backward step is always fatal, and may do more harm in one year than can be rectified in four years of careful grading again. E. P. SMITH.

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CHANGING MARKET DEMANDS.

Correspondence of The Progressive Farmer.

One of the most difficult things the farmer and breeder of cattle has to face is the changing demand of markets. Buyers are constantly changing their demands, and one class of animals will be popular a few seasons and then another will come into fashion. In order to make the business successful the producer must keep abreast of the times and even anticipate these marked changes. This, I say, is difficult, and something that often tries the patience and courage severely. Nevertheless it is something that we must grasp and solve.

Probably the live stock market changes in its wants fully as much as any branch of farming, and the changes are so constant and imperceptible that it is all the more difficult to keep up with them. If it was definitely announced that such and such changes, no matter how radical, would take place next season we would be much better able to adapt our work to them. But no such announcement can be made, and it is only the sharp, wide-awake man who sees the coming change early and changes his business accordingly. When the heavy, lard-making hogs were in active demand a few years ago they brought better prices than the lighter and leaner weights. Then there was a change. The public wanted lean hogs, and those who first changed their breeding and fattening methods to meet this new demand made the most money. Bacon hogs are the fashion today, and the breeder must devote himself to producing the finest there is to be obtained. Canadians have long made a specialty of bacon hogs, and they have for years secured the cream of the trade.

Our sheep have undergone similar changes. At one time it was fine wool sheep, then wool and mutton sheep that payed. Finally we turned to all mutton sheep, and then to the breeds that would yield the best spring lambs. Just now there is an indication that medium grade wools will be in special demand, and it may be that this will mean another change. These changes in the markets can be traced through the whole history of other live stock—poultry, horses and cattle. We need to be on the alert and see which way the markets are moving. When they drift in one direction it is wise to prepare for it and look out for a new demand that will decide the profit and loss for many a breeder.

W. E. EDWARDS.

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