

The Farm

Cattle Raising in Texas. The great cattle range of Southwest Texas is from the Nueces to the Rio Grande, one hundred and fifty miles on the Colorado, fifty miles Eastward, cattle ranged their range with the change of the timber, northers driving them to the timber belts for shelter, while sunshine allures them in immense masses to the open prairies. A correspondent of this department saw 200,000 head gathered within a space of 20,000 acres of lowlands near the mouth of the Nueces River. These migratory tendencies of cattle render the task of collecting and identifying them one of great labor and difficulty, requiring the services of large numbers of men and horses. The employees of the cattle-rangers of a district organize hunting parties each spring and fall, in order to brand the calves. Each stock-owner is required by law to have a regular brand on each animal recorded in the office of the county clerk. In the semi-annual hunts each calf is branded with brand of the cow it follows or sucks. A calf not found accompanying any cow is liable to be appropriated by the party who can first brand it. Parties attempting to brand, or otherwise appropriate cattle, without first making the proper record with the county clerk, are liable to a fine of \$25 for each offense. Without such a public record no stock-raiser could protect himself from depredation by legal prosecution. Of late years parties have driven large numbers of sucking calves from their dams. The increasing demand for beef has created a stronger temptation for this illicit pursuit, necessitating greater efforts to restrain it. For the gathering of the animals for sale the same methods are used to some extent, but of late the cattle-rangers have been employing permanent agents in different parts of the country, paying them 50 cents for every calf branded and \$1 for every steer herded for sale. A bill of sale is given to the purchaser describing the animals by brands, ear-marks, etc., which must be shown to the cattle inspector, who, in return, issues a certificate to the effect that the cattle correspond to the bill of sale. He keeps a permanent record of official transactions, which is always open to inspection. Among the noticeable changes made in the cattle business since the close of the late civil war, is its concentration in fewer hands. The smaller owners found their stocks decreasing, and hence their profits did not meet their expenses. They have generally sold out, either to larger proprietors or to the tallow and hide dealers. But few men now in the business have less than 1,000 branding about 250 calves. The per capita brand is a 50,000. The number of calves branded being from 20 to 25 per cent of that number. On these larger ranches are maintained from 2,000 to 3,000 horses, in order to supply the army of VAQUEEROS with mounts. Large numbers of the cattle are killed for their hides and tallow. Some of these dealers sell to purchasers on the spot, while others ship direct to New Orleans or drive to Kansas. Several leading stock raisers are mentioned as wintering from 2,000 to 3,000 each on the line of the Kansas Pacific Railroad. The term stock cattle, in Texas, includes cows, calves, yearlings, and two-year olds. A party selling 1,000 stock-cattle would furnish 250 of each of the above classes, and charge a premium for the winter. The present price of beef is \$5 per head in spring. Three-year olds, or four-year-olds generally bring from \$10 to \$12 per head. This class furnishes the staple of the Kansas trade. Four year olds, in good condition for shipment to New Orleans, bring \$15 per head. The term heaves is applied only to animals four years old and upward. In good condition, they will net 500 pounds of beef per head. The drought of last season caused a failure of the grass-crop in almost every portion of the State. It enhanced a growing difficulty in the grazing interest—the gradual failure of the abundant native grasses, which have hitherto constituted the great source of profits of the business. As the grasses are eaten down, or trampled down, weeds multiply and scatter their seed by the million. The mesquite brush is thickening upon the old haunts of the cattle. The conviction is forcing itself upon the minds of many of the more intelligent cattlemen that the range must be superseeded by the stock farm, and that the business must assume a systematic character. The pasture-lands must be enclosed in order that the grass may gather headway. The enclosure system has already been inaugurated in Southwestern Texas. Mr. Kennedy, of the Laurels ranch, has run a fence nearly fifty miles across the neck of a peninsula jutting out into the Gulf, enclosing, with wire fence and water, 160,000 acres. Within this inclosure are kept 50,000 cattle, 2,500 saddle-horses. Another enterprise of this character is reported from Fulton, Refugio County. The Rockport and Fulton Pasture Company proposes to inclose a tract of 115,000 acres with wire fence and water, on the other side bordering upon Nueces, Corpus Christi, Port Antonio, and Puerto Ilys and Chiliten Creek. The bodies of water are here so situated that thirteen miles of fencing isolates 200,000 acres. Upon the exterior portion of this area, called Live-Oak Peninsula, are the towns of Rockport and Fulton, whence are shipped the cattle and horses of the State. The inclosure is proposed to be made by the Rockport and Fulton Pasture Company, which has been organized for the purpose. It is proposed to pay full market prices for range cattle and to rely for profits upon the increased value gained by grazing upon the pasture. It is expected that 40,000 or 50,000 head will be fattened each year. It is further proposed to pay attention to the improvements of breeds of cattle and horses, a project entirely impracticable on the open prairie. The fencing will be added as soon as arrangements can be made. A refrigerating steamer, the Firely, constructed according to the "Bray process," has taken several cargoes of fresh beef to New Orleans, and one cargo to Philadelphia. In both cities the beef is said to have given satisfaction. These experiments indicate that beneficial changes have already been inaugurated in the cattle industry of Texas. Agricultural Department Report. Prevention of the Curculio. From the N. Y. Times. Near Kenton, in Delaware, on the dividing ridge equidistant from the Delaware and the Chesapeake Bays, we found a peach-orchard of about seven hundred acres in full bearing, the fruit of which was abundant and unsurpassed in all the quantities that go to make up perfection. This orchard was literally surrounded by the woods, and stumps were scattered here and there among the trees. Here we first heard advanced that exemption from borer and curculio was attributable to the resinous odors of the pine. Proceeding further south, we found the idea generally adopted by the peach-growers, and, as evidence of their faith, the planters selected, wherever practicable, the site of a pine forest for an orchard. We noticed that the trees in such localities were healthy, and uniformly bore good crops of fair fruit. At Dover, the centre of a long settled and old agricultural section, we found the fine orchard of Dr. Ritzigly nearly surrounded by a pine wood, and the famous Todd orchard, now nearly half a century in bearing, similarly situated. So impressed were we with the apparently well-demonstrated theory that certain odors are repellant to the winged insects that breed curculio and borer, that we at once began a series of experiments on trees on our own lands that had grown and blossomed year after year without perfecting their fruit. We first procured a quantity of coal-tar, immersed straw ropes in it and bound them around the trunks of some young trees, that had annually set a large quantity of fruit, all of which dropped from the trees before matured. We also hung pots of the stuff to the chief branches. On other trees we fastened branches of elder blossoms, and of tansy, renewing occasionally throughout the season with some rank-smelling herbs. Some results. From the trees on which we tried the coal tar experiment we picked an enormous crop of prunes, perfect in all respects. The trees were so laden that the lower branches were bent to the ground. The other trees, on which we experimented with the herbs, bore some fruit, while still other trees were entirely bare of fruit. Mr. John Williamson, of Chamont, repeated our experiments on some very old plum trees with similar success, and we have since continued the use of coal-tar with satisfactory results. Cloths or strong paper immersed in coal-tar and tied around the trunk of the tree close to the ground has proved with us a preventive to the borer. This must be done in the early summer, while the preventive measure against curculio must be commenced early in April. We will cheerfully be "more explicit" in our "statements in regard to the white willow." This wood is extensively used by the Messrs. Dupont in the manufacture of choice grades of powder, and commands from \$7 to \$12, and even \$14 per cord at the mills. The wood is cut and corded by the company and we haul it to the mills, which are in the vicinity of our plantation. The "aggregate results" of \$3,768 per acre embracing seven successive cuttings, extending through a period of forty years. The willow with us thrives in low or marshy land, and needs no care after the plantation is once started. A single tree of moderate size will cut a quarter of an acre of wood, and the tree live to attain an age of sixty to seventy years. WILLIAM C. LODGE. Claymont, Delaware. SALTING ASPARAGUS. Salt may be spread on asparagus-beds at any time during the season in heavy or light doses, and without injury. When the salt is scattered on the surface in June or July, it will save considerable work all the rest of the summer in hoeing and weeding, and at the same time plants, especially in young beds, will thrive under such treatment. The salt will not only furnish food for the plants, but will also kill the weeds. Five or six years ago I strongly recommended the application of salt to keep down weeds. Experience proved that the salt effected this result the first season very well indeed, but the following year the weeds appeared to flourish. But what was strange about it was that for three years after one could see at a glance any morning just how far the salt was spread on each walk from the dampness of the surface, when the other parts of the walks were apparently dry. The same experiment was tried again still later, on another part of the garden, and with the same result. It is, therefore, a reasonable conclusion to draw that salt has strong hygroscopic power, and this moisture does have a marked influence on vegetable growth, and especially on the growth of asparagus. It may be spread on very thick without injuring the plants. We have frequently put salt two inches in thickness on old asparagus beds, without checking the growth, but there seemed no advantage in these heavy doses. A light sprinkling of salt, a bushel to one rod square, will be quite enough for all practical purposes. This may be applied, say every other year, to advantage. Some gardeners use a less quantity, and apply it every spring—GARDEN. ROOTS AS MANURE. It has been found that the roots of a good crop of red clover left in an acre of land after the removal of the crop weigh six thousand five hundred and eighty pounds, or from three to three and a half tons. The same examination gave the weight of an acre of rye roots at thirty-five hundred pounds, and of vetch roots at thirty-four hundred and thirty pounds. All of this matter is of course available for the use of such crops as may be grown during or after its decomposition. The well-known superiority of clover as a manuring crop, however, is not due alone to the greater amount of organic matter, taken mainly from the atmosphere, which its roots supply, but also to the position in which this matter is deposited. The roots reach deeply into the soil, and on their decomposition they serve to draw moisture from the lower soil, and by the decomposition of fertilizing matter to a considerable depth they induce the descent of the roots of other crops to a point where they are much more sure of a supply of moisture during the dry seasons than they could be if near the surface. Then again, these deeply penetrating roots traverse parts of the subsoil not heretofore open to vegetation, and in their decomposition they produce a chemical effect on the inorganic substances that lie along their courses, and help to render them, too, serviceable for future crops. RESTORING WORKING LAND.—Wm. Gunn, near Lexington, Ky., writes: I have seen frequent inquiries how to reclaim old and worn lands. A quick and cheap plan is to sow the land in oats as early as you can in the Spring, as soon as ripe plow under, keep off all stock and you will have a tremendous fall growth of oats, which you may mow in October, or, if sooth, feed November, then sow rye, graze in the Spring and feed it down; when ripe plow under and you will see one of the finest rye fields you ever saw; or, if you wish, sow clover on the rye the first Spring. It is very effective and cheap. I saw the above tried in Tennessee where I was a boy; the land was so worn that it could not be plowed high; they were plowed under when ripe and again in November. The land was planted in corn the next year, and made a large yield; it was before the days of clover. I have tried it repeatedly since with good success. N. Y. Times.

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