WINTER CARE OF BROOD SOWS.

Those who are already engaged in swine production, and persons just beginning, will have to practise the strictest economy in feeding and management during the coming winter, if they expect to be in the business for any length of time.

Hogs can not make use of large amounts of roughage. They utilize succulent pasture and, when fed grain in addition, make profitable pork. When winter comes and pastures begin to run short, the feed bill begins to run up. To keep breeding sows in excellent physical condition so they can produce strong, healthy litters, they should be kept on pasture whenever possible, and given some grain in addition.

When the sows are put into winter quarters they may safely run in herds of quite large numbers. Plenty of run for exercise and sufficient space at the feed troughs without crowding is very necessary. The gestation period of sows is approximately 114 days. A record should be kept of the date on which each sow is bred. Two or three weeks before a sow is due to farrow she should be taken away from the rest of the herd and housed and fed in a separate pen, where she can become acquainted with her surroundings and can farrow her pigs undisturbed.

A sole grain ration is expensive and is not the best for the sow. Every feeder should supply all the green feed he can. It can be furnished by feeding alfalfa, clover, soy-beans and cow-peas. Some farmers think that hogs will not eat hay, but this belief is wrong, for they eat alfalfa with a relish. Build a rack and keep it filled with alfalfa hay all the time.

Sows that are developing a litter must be fed liberally, but not overfed. A sow that is too fat is clumsy with her pigs and generally mashes some of them. A thin sow will probably farrow a delicate litter that will not be raised to weaning time. A fair condition of flesh is all that is required. Concentrated grain feed without the necessary bulk often constipates a sow and she is unable properly to farrow her pigs.

A good ration for wintering brood sows is corn and alfalfa hay. Milo maize, barley, rye or frosted wheat will answer if it is impossible to secure corn. Farmers who have wintered sows by feeding them legume hay and grain claim it is not only the cheapest but also the best method of feeding sows to produce strong pigs.

The small grains should be ground or cracked before they are fed. They can be fed dry or in the form of a slop. When any of these grains are fed in combination with alfalfa hay it is not necessary to feed a protein supplement. If clover or the other hays just mentioned are fed, it is better to feed tankage or oil-meal with the corn, milo maize, rye, barley or wheat in about the proportion of one to ten. Two pounds of this feed for every 100 pounds live weight of the sow is sufficeient. Such a ration insures strong, healthy litters.

Poultry

Between Christmas and New Year is a week that the ordinary man takes for a holiday. Not so with the poultryman. For him it is a busy time. The pens for the new year must be selected and mated, the accounts for 1917 must be closed and all important work for the present year must be finished. There are so many duties to perform that the week is hardly long enough. It is important to know what our receipts have been, and what our expenses were. It is necessary to take inventory of stock, that we may know the worth of our possessions.

Roasting fowls that will weigh ten or twelve pounds to the pair are salable about now. Capons had better not be marketed until after Christmas.

Market all old and heavy turkey gobblers at once.

Keep the hens busy scratching. Litter the floor of the pen heavily with straw, hay or leaves, and scatter the grain in the litter. Exercise on these cold, frosty mornings will not only warm up the bodies of the fowls, but it will pave the way for more eggs. It is well at night to give an extra allowance of grain, scattered in the litter, so that the fowls will have something to work for the next morning before it is time to receive their regular breakfast. As the weather grows colder the corn ingredient can be increased.

Do not fail to give, daily, what green stuff is possible. Such roots as turnips and beets are relished. These are cut in half and nailed against the wall so that the fowls can keep pecking at them until all are gone.

The Dairy

Baby Beeves for Quick Returns.

Baby beeves sell as high as heavier cattle and cost the producers less. It takes less feed to produce a pound of flesh on them than an matured cattle. The young heifers sell as well, and sometimes better, than the steers, and the returns from the money invested come in quicker. As a rule the heifers are in better condition at weaning time than the steers.

If one would get the best results in raising baby beef, care must be taken in selecting the cows and the sire. It is not necessary that the cows be pure bred, but the sires should be pure bred and from a standard registered herd.

A dairy strain in the cows is not best, but after several crosses it may give a tendency to better milk production along with the beef qualities, provided the sire is always of the beef type. A sire with good beef qualities and a tendency to early maturity should be selected.

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The Sunday School

INTERNATIONAL LESSON DECEMBER 23.

Lesson XII. Advent of The Messiah (Christmas Lesson)—Matt. 2. 1-12. Golden Text, Luke 2. 11.

Verses 1, 2 tell of the arrival of the Magi, some time after the birth of Jesus. Jesus—The Greek form of the Hebrew Joshua; 1. 21 furnishes an interpretation of the name. Bethlehem—The birthplace of David (1 Sam. 16. 12); about six miles south of Jerusalem. Luke 2. 4 tells how Mary came to be in Bethlehem at the time. Harold—King of the Jews from B. C. 37 4; Jesus was born a year or two before Herod's death. The common reckoning of the Christian era, which originated in the sixth century, rests upon a miscalculation. Behold—Calls attention to something startling or wonderful. Wise-men—Or, "Magi;" they were astrologers who thought they had the power to read destinies in the sky. They came from the east, but their country is not indicated. There is no foundation for the legend that they were kings, three in number, named Caspar, Melchior, and Belthasar. The number three is an influence from the triple offering (verse 11). Star—Some unusual phenomenon in the sky had attracted the attention of the Magi. Some have thought that it was a conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn, which took place at about that time; others that it was the appearance of Sirius, which rose with the sun; still others, that it was a comet. The exact nature cannot be determined; but whatever it was it was interpreted by the Magi as announcing the birth of a royal child. In the east—Better, "in its rising." King of the Jews—The learned men of the east may have been familiar with the Messianic hopes of the Jews; hence they naturally turned to the capital of the Jews in search of him.

Verses 3-6 describe the impression made by the arrival of the Magi and their inquiries. Troubled—A king who had come to a throne through fraud and violence might well dread the appearance of a rival. Though the people would also be agitated, their feelings would be of a different character. The king was afraid the people would rejoice over the prospect that their long-cherished hopes would be realized. Scribes—The official interpreters of the Jewish scriptures. They and the priests would surely know about the new-born king. The Christ—or, "The Messiah;" that is, the anointed one; whose coming had been expected and promised for centuries. The priests and scribes furnished the desired information, and in support quoted the announcement in Mic. 5. 2 that the ideal king of the future should be born in Bethlehem. It should be noted, however, that the quotation is not an exact reproduction of the original Hebrew; the evangelist was interested in the thought, not the exact words.

Verses 7, 8 reveal Herod as a shrewd schemer, working in secret, in an attempt to cover up his cruel schemes. What time—This information would assist him in taking further steps against the child. Sent them—On the surface Herod's interest seemed perfectly sincere.

Verses 9-11 picture the finding of the child and the adoration of the Magi. In the east—See on verse 2. The evangelist considers the movement and the standing still of the star, and thus also the finding of the child, the result of miraculous, divine interference. House—Wherever the child may have been born (Luke 2. 7). Matthew states that the Magi found him in a house, to which he may have been transferred after his birth. Treasures—Or, "chests containing their treasures." Frankincense—A sweet-smelling gum obtained as a milky exudation from a tree. Myrrh—The dried gum of a species of balsam, having a pleasant odor. The gifts presented were suitable for a royal child. The symbolic interpretation of the presents—gold pointing to royalty, frankincense to divinity, and myrrth to mortality—is fancieful and arbitrary.

Verse 12 narrates the return of the Magi. Warned—Again the Magi received divine direction, this time through a dream. The divine purpose was to prevent Herod from carrying out at once his murderous purposes against the child.

Hogs

Winter Pigs Without Milk.

The average farmer has faced the problem of how to raise winter pigs without milk. A satisfactory ration, when milk is not to be had, is a thick mash of the consistency of cream, composed of one-half corn-meal; the other half may be wheat middlings, equal parts of finely ground oats and barley, or oats or barley with middlings. Mix with hot water and feed warm three times a day until the pigs are four months of age. After that twice daily, at about eight in the morning and five at night, is enough. Feed just what they will clean up greedily and no more. Give a drink of water occasionally.

When the pigs are four months old the slop may be thinned. Water may not be necessary in addition to that in the slop. Give a little alfalfa hay, or better still, ground alfalfa may take the place of the middlings or oats after the pigs are five months old. Scatter soaked corn and whole oats on the floor to induce exercise, and always keep in the pen a pile of hardwood ashes on which a handful of salt has been scattered. An acre or two of winter-rye pasture will be found very desirable in this connection. Dry bedding and lots of it should be provided at all times and changed at least once a week.

What could be sadder than marring this joyous and sacred season by turning a fir tree into a fire tree?

War-Time Christmas Confections

Christmas—the season of mirth and jollity with holly and evergreen in our homes, with a table that in its festive air bespeaks the season, with the happiness of youth even in homes that have known the ravages of war—how will it be this year?

A little less exuberance, holly and evergreens as before, a table with the lavishness of other years somewhat modified, but still the same joy abounding among the boys and girls in Canadian homes in city and country.

With the people of France, Italy, Belgium and Serbia on rations, with the boys and girls in Great Britain knowing less and less of confectionery and more and more of plain and restricted diet, it is not likely that there will be such a lavish supply of sweetmeats in Canada this Christmas as in other years.

Does it mean that there will be no Christmas candy? May we not send any to the men at the front? Must the boys and girls at home have a candy-less Christmas? We are asked only to use a little ingenuity in the combination of fruits and nuts, and of sweetmeats made from honey, molasses, maple sugar and raisins. We can eat all the candies we want with a clear conscience if we eat those made from other things than cane or beet sugar. Chocolate is quite permissible and the varieties of candies which can be made, without the use of cane or beet sugar, are numerous.

Human beings need sweets. Candies are wholesome when eaten in moderation. There is a movement on foot in the United States to display in the shops only such varieties of candies as are made entirely or largely from other ingredients than cane or beet sugar. People who are unpatriotic enough to want the latter may have them by asking for them, but it is anticipated that the demand for those varieties will be greatly reduced.

There never were any confections half as delicious, or half as wholesome as those made in the home kitchen. They are simple and nourishing. They satisfy the child's normal craving for sweetmeats without creating a false taste. It should be a pleasant occupation for housewives to devise new and pretty Christmas bonbons for their boys and girls. They can picture some of the following at the children's party or on the dinner table—dates split open, pitted, a little marshmallow icing placed within and bright red cherries on top; others filled with cherries or nuts or with marshmallow and nuts. Figs form the basis for another confection when sliced and topped with marshmallows and raisins. Other fig slices might have maple sugar and nuts on top, while maple sugar bonbons could be nicely finished off with raisins.

A pretty idea for anyone wanting a particularly decorative effect is that of a light yellow basket, with a bow of fluffy gauze ribbon on the handle and in the basket rows of prunes from which the pits have been removed and the openings filled with whipped cream piled high. The finishing touch is given when chopped green pistachio nuts are sprinkled over the cream.

The following are some tried and proved candy recipes which every housekeeper may be assured are nourishing and are proper war-time confections:

Pop-Corn Candy.—For making pop-corn candy either honey, maple syrup, molasses, white cane syrup or corn syrup may be used instead of sugar. To one cup of syrup allow one tablespoon of vinegar. Boil together until syrup hardens when dropped in cold water. Pour over freshly popped corn and mold into balls or fancy shapes for the Christmas tree. Little pop-corn men will please the children. Mark in the features and outlines with melted chocolate.

Crystallized Fruits.—Use your own preserves. Peach, pear, apple, quince or watermelon rind will do. Drain from the fruit all syrup possible. Cut any size desired sprinkle with sugar and dry in a very slow oven. It may be necessary to sprinkle the fruit again with sugar during the drying. When dry enough not to be at all sticky, sprinkle with sugar and pack in layers with wax paper between. This fruit may be used for dipping in bitter chocolate for bitter-sweets.

Bitter-Sweets.—An attractive variety of candies may be made by dipping sweet fruits in bitter chocolate. Use for this purpose dates, citron, candied orange peel or crystallized fruit. Melt unsweetened chocolate in a double boiler. Keep the chocolate just warm enough to prevent solidifying. With a silver fork drop pieces of fruit in chocolate. See that each piece is completely coated, then remove to waxed paper to harden.

Fruit Paste.—Put through the meat chopper enough cherry, peach or quince preserves to make a half-pint with the juice. Heat fruit and add two tablespoons of gelatine, previously softened in a very little cold water. Stir well, and continue stirring until it begins to cool and thicken, then pour into oiled dish to make a layer one inch thick. Let dry slowly, sprinkle with sugar and place in box with waxed paper between the layers. A mixture of dried apricots and dates may be used for this paste. Wash apricots and soak overnight in enough water to cover. Pour off water, bring it to a boil, pour over apricots and let stand until cool. Put apricots and dates through meat chopper, and proceed with the proportions as given.

Chocolate Dainties.—Put through the meat chopper one-half cup each of dates, figs and nut meats. Add one tablespoon orange juice, a little grated orange peel and one square of melted unsweetened chocolate. Mould into balls and roll in chopped nuts or granulated sugar. This mixture may be packed in an oiled tin, put under a weight until firm, then cut in any shape desired.

Maple Creams.—Boil one cup maple sugar with one cup water until it forms a soft ball when dropped in cold water. Remove from the fire and stir rapidly until it becomes creamy. Form into balls the size of marbles and put nut meats on either side. Lay on wax paper to cool.

Horse Sense

Many farmers have a way, as soon as the land freezes in the fall, of reducing their horses' feed, particularly the grain, and of keeping the horses standing in the stable until spring. About three weeks before spring work begins the horses are encouraged to eat all they can. Quite often a big surprise awaits the owner of horses thus overfed and underexercised when the animals are first urged to do any considerable amount of work. In many cases such animals drop in their tracks, suffering from what is popularly known as paralysis.

The facts are, the animals' systems are out of order through being overloaded with matter that has accumulated because the horses have not been exercised at frequent and regular intervals. Frequently when such ill-conditioned horses leave the stable they seem full of spirit, whereas they are simply uneasy and full of misery.

To prevent such trouble, horses should be kept in condition all winter by regular exercise. Any farmer who makes up his mind to it can do this. The barnyard should be cleaned up every day. Wood may be hauled for the summer. Fencing material can be gathered up and the new fence placed ready for spring erection. Gravel or broken stones may be hauled for the roads. The horses should be given a run in the open fresh air in order that they may be hardened to exposure. If the exercise is increased as the spring work comes on, the farmer may feel assured that his horses will not fail him when he needs them most. Their muscles will be hard, and they will stand anything in reason.

That Christmas Turkey.

A Christmas turkey isn't such a luxury when you consider all the really good leftover dishes it can be the basis of after "the day." Here are some suggestions for making the most of your turkey:

When serving, carve slices and serve without the bones. What is left on the platter may be used in soup. The second day take a sharp knife and cut all the bits of turkey from the carcass. Add to half of this diced cold potato and mix carefully with cream-sauce to which is added a little finely diced red sweet-pepper (preferably home canned), chopped parsley, salt and pepper to taste. Serve on a platter with a border of alternate small onions and thinly sliced carrot—all very hot. Some variety of tart jelly or cranberry sauce is a piquant addition and inexpensive if home-made. Let a day elapse, then serve the remainder of the turkey mixed lightly with cooked rice, spaghetti or macaroni, and the rest of the turkey gravy. Cut the remainder of the stuffing into small slices, brown, and use as a garnish. Coleslaw made of red cabbage is delicious with this particular "left-over." The positively last appearance of the turkey is in soup made substantial enough to serve as the basis of a meal.

Sheep Notes

After running in the stalk fields, the wool of the sheep often becomes filled with burs. Also, when the stock is allowed to run free during the winter months, they come in contact with fences and other obstacles that cause their fleeces to have a shaggy appearance. This should be avoided because sheep that go to market with ragged fleeces and with burs in their wool do not sell so well as those with the clean fleeces.

When sheep are sold at the market, the buyer notes the wool carefully. Wool has become one of the leading factors in manufacturing circles today, and if it is burry and shaggy looking, a discount in price is made. Very often sheep with bad fleeces will sell for fifty to seventy-five cents per hundred less than other stock.

Your Problems

Conducted by Mrs Helen Law

Mothers and daughters of all ages are cordially invited to write to this department. Initials only will be published with each question and its answer as a means of identification, but full name and address must be given in each letter. Write on one side of paper only. Answers will be mailed direct if stamped and addressed envelope is enclosed.

Address all correspondence for this department to Mrs. Helen Law, 235 Woodbine Ave., Toronto.

Town Lass:—One very jolly way of entertaining guests at a holiday party is to let them trim the Christmas tree. You may be sure there is no stiffness around when you set young persons to trimming a Christmas tree.

Here are some games that will "break the ice and keep it broken," even if you do not care to have a tree-trimming party:

Christmas Cobweb—Distribute little comic Christmas favors by means of a web of string. Start the web from the center of the room, like the parlor table. There are as many strings to the web as there are guests at the party. At the end of each string is tied the gift. The strings are twisted together and placed all over the room. There is no end of fun in trying to untangle them to get to the end and to the gift, which, of course, makes fun of some characteristic of the person. If any of the members of the party are suspected of being engaged, be sure to have their string twisted together and leading into a bunch of mistletoe.

Observation—Make from scarlet net a huge specimen of the Christmas stocking and stuff it well with all kinds of common things gathered around the house. Hang it up. Give each of the guests pencil and paper and let them all come and look at the stocking. Then tell them to withdraw and to write down what they saw in the stocking. Those having the greatest number of correct objects on their list win prizes, if prizes are to be given.

In Holly Colors—This is a lively game. Hang at opposite ends of the room two bags made of red and green cheesecloth fashioned in stocking shape. Conceal around the room bits of old cloth tied up in red and in green tissue paper. Decorate all the players with green and red paper rosettes, the decoration each wears to indicate whether he belongs to the green or red band, for these act as opponents in the game. Players form in line, red and green alternating, and the piano strikes up a lively tune. All march around the room quickly, but when the music breaks off, as it will do very suddenly, all break ranks and try to drop into the stocking belonging to their respective divisions the little red and green "bullets" wrapped in their respective colors. When the music resumes the players get into line again and so on, with several breaks. When the contents of the stockings are counted, members of the band having the most bullets win.

Mrs. L. McD.:—You are wise to stop and ask yourself how you can economize in Christmas eatables this year. Every thrifty housewife is surely pledging herself to the most careful planning that she has ever engaged in for the festive season. In the first place, use fowl or other poultry in preference to beef and pork. You are rendering patriotic service in using the food which is not shipped overseas for the armies. A very good substitute for plum pudding is carrot pudding which is less expensive and more digestible than the time-honored variety. Have you tried it? Here is the recipe: 1 cup each grated carrot, potato, apple; 1 cup each sugar, chopped suet, seeded raisins, 1½ cups flour, 1 teaspoon each cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg; 1 teaspoon baking soda; juice of ½ lemon. Sift together flour, salt, soda and spices and add to grated vegetable, sugar and suet. Add lemon juice last. Put into a well greased mould and steam four hours.

Mother o' Mine:—1. The following list contains some of the best books for children. Many of them can be bought in cheap reprints: Mother Goose Complete; Aesop's Fables; In Story Land, by Elizabeth Harrison; Outlook Fairy Book; The Land of Really True; The Hand of Never Was; Just So Stories, by Kipling; Wild Animals I Have Known, by Thompson Seton; Alice in Wonderland, by Lewis Carroll; Children's King Arthur; Water Babies, by Chas. Kingsley; Lamb's Tales from Shakespeare; Child's Garden of Verse, by Louis Stevenson. 2. Here are the recipes you ask for: Caramel sauce—Melt a cupful of sugar in a saucepan that has not been scorched. Be careful that it does not burn. It must be watched every second. Add three-fourths of a cupful of boiling water and let it simmer for fifteen minutes. When cool stir in a teaspoonful of vanilla. Strong coffee may be used instead of the water to increase the flavor. A half cupful of chopped nuts can be added, too.

Lemon sauce—Mix three-fourths of a cupful of sugar, two teaspoonfuls of cornstarch and a pinch of salt. Add to this one and one-half cupfuls of hot water and stir constantly until it begins to boil. Let simmer for ten minutes and then add one teaspoonful of butter and the juice and rind of half a lemon or one-half a teaspoonful of lemon extract.

Enquirer:—An appeal to the women of the country has gone forth from the office of the Food Controller to avoid purchasing or making Christmas candy of cane or beet sugar. Your enquiry is a timely one. It is not necessary to stint the youngsters in sweetmeats but judgment should be used in the choice of varieties. Pop-corn candy, maple creams, and fruit confections may all be made at home without too much expense or trouble. Utilize fruit and nuts as much as you can and eliminate sugar wherever possible. You can do this by using brown sugar, honey molasses and corn syrup instead. See the article on this page stead. See the article on this page, entitled "War-Time Christmas Confections."

Soldier's Sister:—You are misinformed on this point. You can send soap without a license to your brother or to any other soldiers overseas.

Farmer's Wife:—You and your husband are among the fortunate if you are raising hogs and most certainly we would advise you to urge him to increase production. "The time has come when a hog is worth more than a shell and wheat is worth more than munitions" says Hon. G. W. Brown, and it is a fact that Europe now possesses 33,000,000 fewer hogs than were in existence the first year of the war. Mr. Hanna is particularly emphasizing the advantages of hog-raising and has repeatedly stated that the farmer has everything to gain by it, the shortage ensuring a demand long after the war is over. There is a good article on the subject on this page.

The Fire Tree.

On Christmas eve many homes will be set afire by carelessness in handling candle-lighted Christmas trees. To the thoughtful will come the reasons for the hints which follow:

Never leave an illuminated tree unwatched.

Never use cotton batting nor festoons of tissue paper on a lighted tree.

Never use ornaments made of celluloid.

Never put cotton beneath the tree to make the carpet look as if snow-covered.

Never remove presents from the tree until the candles have been blown out. When the removal of presents begins, children, and adults, too, are giving their attention to individual items rather than to the tree as a whole, so it doesn't much matter how the tree looks then.

In the interest of beauty and safety, also, it is better to put the presents under the tree, not on it, for most of the presents ordinarily placed upon a tree disfigure it both by their presence and by springing the branches out of position, spoiling its symmtery.

A sponge tied to the end of a long stick and a pailful of water should be kept beside the tree while the candles are burning. If the tree is a large one, have a stick, sponge and water on either side of it.

Aside from the fact that the store decorations are scarce and expensive, economy should be practised wherever possible this year. The decorations that you make at home, or that the children make, speak eloquently of a labor of love and add to the Christmas spirit. With a little thought and ingenuity a tree may be safely and beautifully decorated at slight expense.