

Angora Goats on Brush Land

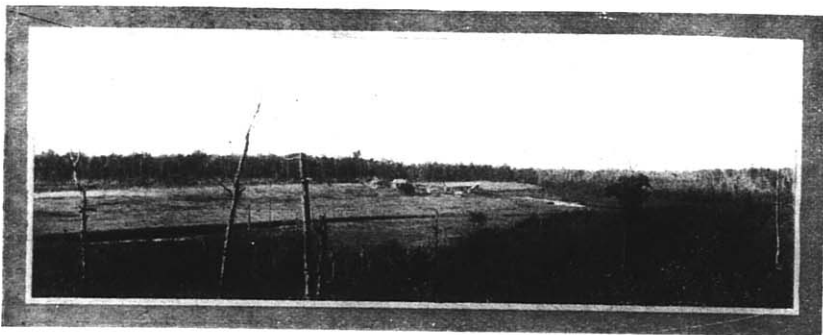
ANGORA goats are automatic brush destroying machines. It has been said that they will do work for nothing and pay for the privilege.

In the spring a farmer securely encloses a small tract of brush land and turns in his Angoras. In the Fall he finds his land cleared, and his Angoras

"The Angora Goat and Its Usefulness."

BY PROF. THOS. SHAW

ALTHOUGH Angora goats have not been introduced into Northern Wisconsin in any considerable numbers, their day is coming. Much of the land is covered with a dense growth of brush and



View of a Clearing—Brush in Foreground is Ideal Angora Goat Pasture.

fattened and ready for the market. The fence that encloses the Angoras must be properly constructed so that the goats will not push through or climb over, for they are great climbers, but the profit from these animals justifies this expense. Their meat finds a ready sale in the Chicago markets as mutton or "venison," and the mohair brings a high price.

The great value of the Angora is admirably presented in an illustrated Bulletin (No. 27) published by the U. S. Department of Agriculture, entitled "Information Concerning the Angora Goat" by G. F. Thompson. This will be sent free to those addressing the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

young trees. These dense growths are tedious to clear by the ordinary methods. It would not be necessary to labor thus if goats were introduced. They would do the clearing. And while thus engaged they should prove a source of revenue to the owner. The forest that is well timbered may easily be made a source of revenue to him who clears it, in the sale of the timber and the wood on it. But usually brush land is expensive to clear. It is a great matter then, when, by the introduction of goats, brush can be given a money value.

GOATS AS BRUSH DESTROYERS.

No animal yet introduced into America will compare with the goat as a destroyer of brush, briars and young timber. The time required will depend upon the closeness with which the leaves are kept eaten by the goats in summer. They will also browse in



winter when the snow is not too deep, but at that season they should not be confined to browse alone. They will also eat the bark on many kinds of trees and in that way kill them, but their mission is rather the destruction of brushes and twigs that cover the land, in some places so thickly that one can scarcely walk through it. As not a little of the cut-over land is of this character, and indeed some that has not been cut over, there is wide room for the introduction of goats as clearers of land. The lands that have been burnt over also sustain a most vigorous growth of young trees, such as goats love to browse upon. It is very probable, therefore, that large flocks of goats will yet be introduced into Northern Wisconsin to help clear the land.

THE COST OF CLEARING BRUSH LANDS.

It has been stated that timber land will usually produce a sufficient return in wood and lumber to pay for the cost of clearing. In the absence of personal experience in clearing brush lands with goats in Northern Wisconsin it may be hazardous to state that the goats will give a return sufficient to repay the outlay of the investment, but I can see no reason why they should not be made to pay, so that the land could virtually be cleared for nothing. The goats could turn the brush into meat. For this meat there is a sale in our markets, and for the mohair there is also a good demand, since so much of it is imported from other countries. When the goats destroy the brush, the portion of the young bushes that can't be eaten soon decay and fall upon the ground. Tufts of grass begin to come up as the sunlight is let in where the bushes grew, hence by the time the twigs are dead there is good pasture for sheep or other live stock. And the growing of this pasture may be hastened by scattering the seed of certain grasses and clover over the land in the early spring while

the browsing is still going on. It should be remembered, however, that the goats would have to be well fenced in if they are to do the work assigned them in the most approved fashion. The fence may be made of rails, boards, or woven wire. In any event



it would be necessary to have it a good height, but the fence would be there when the brush had disappeared, and would be equally useful for inclosing pastures for other classes of live stock.

Goats have been but little kept on the forest lands of the North, hence very little is known about them by farmers in the Eastern States. The Angoras in the high-grade form would be the kind to introduce, not because they would kill the brush more readily than common goats, but because they furnish mohair and meat that bring a superior price. They ought not to be kept on brush alone as they will fare better when they can have some grass. Like sheep, they require shelter in winter and forage in addition to whatever browsing they may do. And they ought not to be allowed to produce their young until the weather is settled in the spring, as the young kids are more tender than the lambs. They can also be kept on grass pastures after brush has disappeared, although it is at least questionable if they will pay as well as sheep under these conditions.