



NEWSY NOTES

By AGRICOLA

HYBRID CORN

Through the kindness of a friend I have been enabled to plant a small trial patch of hybrid corn. Having a large "bump of curiosity" according to the "Encyclopaedia" I was not content with merely planting this special kind of corn but felt that I must know why it was better than the ordinary kind. First I learned that it is the result of inbreeding various strains for several generations, and then cross-breeding them. This of course takes many years work—in fact the experiments commenced in 1905 and did not successfully terminate till 1929. In the ordinary corn was commercially distributed till 1933. By 1939 there were several distinct strains available to growers.

Previous to these experiments most corn was "open pollinated." To understand the meaning of this term one must know that the pollen or male element is produced at the top of the stalk, while the seeds (fruiting at first) develop at the base of the silk. In the ordinary course, the sperm-bearing pollen is carried by the wind to the silk and thereby the seed is made fertile. This is open pollination. For inbreeding, food pollen-tassels and the silk are protected by paper bags till both are mature, and then the plants are "self-pollinated" by hand. Such inbred strains after a while become highly uniform. Lastly, the most successful strains are "cross-pollinated" (crossed in ordinary parlance) to produce varieties combining special characteristics, such as long ears, full-kernelled ears, resistance to drought, heat, wind, insects, and so on. The characters of the hybrid corn are "not easily predictable from those of the parents and hundreds of experimental crosses must be made for successful results."

The long series of experiments were begun and carried on by Dr. G. H. Shull, now professor of botany and genetics at Princeton University. The U. S. Department of Agriculture was very slow in taking up the matter, probably deterred by thoughts of the time that was bound to elapse before the results could be seen. But last year (1939) growers had become so convinced of the value of Dr. Shull's hybrids that in the United States 25,000,000 acres were planted with his new strains. Dr. Shull, like a true biologist, gave the corn to the world without recompense; but he remarked that if he had received royalty on only one cent per acre on his last year's planting he would have received the tidy sum of \$250,000. Yield-increases of 10 to 40 per cent were reported from the use of the new seed. The one group of farm publications went so far as to say: "Hybrid corn is the most spectacular and far-reaching agricultural development in the history of mankind in importance with the invention of the telephone and the internal combustion engine. In the midst of economic transition, most people have overlooked the traffic in hybrid corn. The technique, of which hybrid corn is the forerunner."

Nature Notes

This week I have been privileged to see plants in bloom, which I saw last, half a century ago. I think I mentioned last year that I had raised some seedlings of broom peat (Saxifraga umbrosa). I had shrined in Scottish soil and I saw, however, one only, survived the winter and now it's in bloom. The flower is like that of a sweet pea, with standard, wings, and keel, all fairly large. The petals, in his "Student's Flora of the British Isles," says that the flowers are bright yellow, rarely white; but my plant has the wings with a deep reddish-brown centre, shading to yellow at the margin. I saw the first one to expand. I thought of the exotic yellow orchids, Masdevallia or Nanodes? This is probably the sub-species C. S. andreae. Another plant in bloom is the London Pride (Anemone hepatica). Again I have but one plant, despite many attempts to raise it from seed. Said a friend, "It takes an expert to grow it in Canada." So I turned it into the rock-garden fall. I saw the first one to expand. I thought of the exotic yellow orchids, Masdevallia or Nanodes? This is probably the sub-species C. S. andreae. Another plant in bloom is the London Pride (Anemone hepatica). Again I have but one plant, despite many attempts to raise it from seed. Said a friend, "It takes an expert to grow it in Canada." So I turned it into the rock-garden fall. I saw the first one to expand. I thought of the exotic yellow orchids, Masdevallia or Nanodes? This is probably the sub-species C. S. andreae.

Preserved Turnip?

There is a comic strip dealing with the adventures of a hillbilly family, whose son "Lil' Abner" is often in difficulties. The family is supposed to live on pork chops (note) of turnips. I rather the insects cleared out the turnips of the year, the plight of the starving hillbillies drew the sympathy of a too-credulous public and the cartoonist was offered all kinds of food to feed the cartoon. Lil' Abner, a Knoxville woman sent in a jar of preserved turnips, which the cartoonist was amazed to find "damned good." That was one on me! I'd never heard of such a thing. I brought across the marvelous collection, and gives thirty ways of using turnips but they are all of a rather "solid" character, suitable to British taste, and no real food of preserving turnips might. However I suppose one might use turnips as a "body" for a jam, just as pumpkins are used.

Geoffrey of Monmouth

I am just going over the "Histories of the Kings of Britain," by Geoffrey of Monmouth, an ecclesiastic, who lived 1100-1154. It is a queer farrago, dealing with the supposed settlement of Britain by fugitives from Troy, under the command of Brut, a great-grandson of Aeneas. Brut or Brute, gave his name to the country he occupied which thus became Brit-ain; and his followers were supposed to be the original "Ancient Britons." From Brut descended the famous King Arthur, whose deeds fill a considerable portion of Geoffrey's book. Many names are taken up with the promise of "what" the Madman, who foretold the destiny of Britain, in very remote terms. This curious reader will find a résumé of the book in the "History of the Peloponnesian War" by Thucydides.

WEEKLY LIVESTOCK MARKET REPORT

OTTAWA, JUNE 27

SUMMARY

Moderate offerings from day to day and diminishing supplies of dry-fed butcher cattle combined to create a brisk trading session during the past week. Prices at major stock yards were from 25c to 75c more higher with late transactions recording the largest upturn. The calf market also showed up to better advantage with some slight gains made. The hog market was unchanged and lambs and calves steady, except at Alberta and some Saskatchewan markets where there was a definitely lower tendency.

Eastern Cattle Markets

Cattle trade was active and prices higher right from the start at TORONTO. Good killers of all classes sold 25c to 35c above last week's close. At the close, good weight steers were selling 50c to \$9.25, with a couple of gooding \$9.25 and best butchers were worth \$9.25 to \$8.50. Supplies were well cleared except for a few common steers. Good grades sold steady to firm. MONTOUR had few good steers were mostly \$8.25 to \$9 and a top of \$9.15 was reached. Good cows sold from \$6 up to \$8.25. Receipts in the MARITIMES compared with requirements and the market took on a steady tone with good to choice grain-fed steers quoted at \$8 to \$8.50.

Western Cattle Markets

Dry-fed butcher cattle are becoming scarcer in the west and there was a brisk demand for any selected material offered at WINNIPEG. Prices scored a sharp advance with good grades 75c or more higher. The present strength in the market for strictly good butchers was demonstrated on Thursday when a load of steers of twelve weights established a new high for the current season of \$9.25. The remainder of the suitable dry-fed sold from \$8 to \$8.75 and a few good kinds of grass killing steers brought \$7.50 and above. Shipments are still being advised to hold light live cattle for further finishing as such kinds are likely to prove better sellers as the season advances. CALGARY ruled mostly steady up to a top price of \$8 on dry-fed although trade was slow on plain grain-fed. EDMONTON was also active with a bulk of choice steers at \$8 and the bulk of this kind going at \$7.75. A similar trend was in evidence at other western markets. Dry-fed cattle were strong sellers but prices were inclined to be on the slow side. TOPS at PRINCE ALBERT made \$7. MOOSE JAW \$7.35. SASKATOON \$7.75. REGINA \$8, and VANCOUVER \$7.50.

United States Market

Sales of Canadian cattle continued in light volume on American markets. Butcher cattle from Canadian steers at \$9.25 and St. Paul quoted good 1500 lb. steers at \$9.25 and common to good bulls from \$5 to \$6.75. Exports to the United States for the week were 1,060 beef cattle, 433 dairy, and 2,538 calves. Shipments up to date this year total 57,339 beef, 5,769 dairy, and 39,169 calves, compared with 48,357 beef, 5,679 dairy, and 46,500 calves in the same period last year. Exports from April 1st to June 27th under the second quarterly quota were 37,981, compared with 50,882 in the corresponding time last year.

Calves Steady to Firmer

Good veals were firmer at Toronto at \$9 to \$9.50 while Montreal also sold firm with good kinds at \$8 to \$8.50 and top quality at \$9. Last week's loss of Winnipeg was regained with good hand-weight veals selling at \$7 to \$7.50 and choice calves topping at \$8. The high point reached at Prince Albert was \$9. Moose Jaw and Saskatoon \$7.75. Regina \$7.50 and Vancouver \$7.75.

Hog Market Unchanged

Hogs sold at \$8.35 for bacon at Toronto, with a few at \$8.40 off trucks, while dressed sales were \$11 and a few \$11.10. Montreal paid \$8.60 for bacon f. & w. and \$8.75 for dressed. Western markets were unchanged, Winnipeg paying \$7.75 for bacon f. & w. Calgary and Edmonton \$7.75 and Moose Jaw and Regina \$7.50. Moose Jaw and Vancouver \$7.75.

Lambs Steady to Lower

The Toronto lamb market was active with good quality at \$11.50. Effective July 2nd there will be a differential of 1¢ per cwt., between the price paid for good ewes and wether lambs and buck lambs. Montreal had some good lambs up to \$12.25. Good butcher cows were \$8. Calgary closed at \$8.50, a few lower after selling lambs up to \$9.25 and \$9.50. Edmonton was also lower with choice lambs from \$5.50 down. Tops at Prince Albert were \$8. Moose Jaw \$7.75, Saskatoon \$7.50, Regina \$8.25, and Vancouver had some good spring lambs at \$10.50 to \$11.

CATTLE MARKETS

TORONTO was active and sold 5,245 cattle with good killers 25c to 35c higher. The offering consisted almost entirely of grass cattle except for the fed calves on sale. Good quality steers closed between \$9 and \$9.25, with two loads at \$9.35 and plain veals steers sold downward to \$8. Best butcher steers and heifers brought \$8.25 to \$8.50 and common down to \$7.25. Good butcher cows were \$8 to \$8.25, some \$8.50, and canners and cutters from \$3.50 to \$4.50. Good butcher bulls were weighed up at \$5.75 to \$6 and bolognas were taken at \$5 to \$5.50. Fed calves were ready sellers up to \$9 for good ones and a few as high as \$9.50. Several hundred light western steers and stock calves sold steady at \$8.50 to \$7.50.

TIMELY NOTES ON TOPICS CONNECTED WITH Silver Fox Farming

OTTAWA, JUNE 27

SUMMARY

Congratulations to E. Graham Rogers, fellow for rancher and Supervisor of the Tourist Bureau, on the honors won by his son Peter Rogers, Governor-General's School, Summerside High School. By the way, Graham is also showing his old time flair for publicity, formerly exercised in the interest of fox farming but now unaimed to reach the tourists to our shores.

Dr. E. S. Notting of the Dominion Health of Animals Branch, has notified W. Fred Burke, Provincial Fox Breeder, Department of Agriculture, that there are a number of foxes in this city and country that are showing symptoms similar to canine distemper, and that it would be well for fox ranchers to take precautions to see that no stray dogs are brought in contact with their own dogs or have access to premises in proximity to a fox ranch. Any information concerning canine distemper suspects should be given to Dr. Notting or Mr. Burke.

It is about ten years since there has been an outbreak of distemper among foxes here. It originated in Summerside and devastated a number of ranches before it could be conquered. As it occurred in the winter months and travel was at a minimum, it did not spread over the Island. An outbreak at this season of the year would be much more dangerous. Fromm Bros claim to have perfected a vaccine that will immunize foxes against distemper and also against encephalitis, the deadly disease that has killed off thousands of horses in the western States and western Canada. Distemper and diseases of a like nature are much more prevalent south of the boundary than in Canada.

The first fox field day of the season will be held at George A. Calbeck's ranch, Summerside, commencing at one o'clock p.m. Standard Time. This is under the auspices of the Silver Fox Breeders' and Exhibitors' Association and a good practical program has been made up and addresses will be delivered by George A. Calbeck, J. C. Jack, L. W. Hanford, E. Dennis Smith and others. The program will include visits to Lowell Hancock and the Dominion Experimental Fox Ranch. This will be a great opportunity to see three famous ranches and note the way they are managed. The pups in various stages of growth. All foxmen who can possibly do so should be on hand and make their Field Day a real success. Another Field Day is planned for Montague the last week in August and then to Prince County, probably O'Leary.

J. H. McNeill, New Haven, has been making his annual fox sale last year at the Provincial Fox Show. Last winter he kept over thirteen females. Ten of these have 43 living pups. He is producing a dry living type of fox and can be classed as one of our successful ranchers.

The value of Canada's raw fur production in the twelve months ending June 30th, 1939, was \$14,204,750, an increase of over one million dollars from 1938. The total production comprises pelts taken from trappers and pelts sold.

A few common stockers remained unsold. Milk and springers dull at \$40 to \$75 each.

MONTREAL was steady to firm on an offering of 1,200 cattle. Steers topped at \$9.15, with good ones mostly \$8.25 to \$9 and others downward to \$6. Butcher heifers were \$5 to \$7.25 and butcher cows from \$4 to \$6.50 with good ones from \$6 up to \$7.50. Bulls were sold at \$3 to \$4 and bulls were sold at \$4 to \$5.25 for bolognas and \$5.50 to \$9 for good kinds. Milkers made \$45 to \$85 each.

MARITIMES cattle receipts continued light at the market but a steady tone. Good to choice grain-fed steers made \$8 to \$8.50, mediums \$7.25 to \$7.75 and lower grades down to \$5.50. Butcher cows were \$5 to \$9 and canners and cutters \$3 to \$4.

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MONTREAL had good veals at \$8 to \$8.50, tops \$9, mediums \$7 to \$7.50 and others down to \$6. Most of the drinkers sold at \$5 to \$5.50.

HOG MARKETS

The hog run for the Dominion was 7,462, compared with 7,929 in the same week last year. Totals to date this year, 2,323,432; last year, 1,583,816.

TORONTO bacon sold at \$8.35 off trucks, a few at \$8.40 and dressed sales were mostly \$11, with a few at \$11.10.

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TORONTO lambs steady, good \$11.50, culls \$9 to \$10. Sheep were steady at \$2.50 to \$3. Effective July 2nd buck lamb will be discounted 1¢ per cwt.

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