

THE FUTURE OF FARMING AND IMPROVING THE SOIL

Sometimes it is permitted to editors and farmers alike to dream dreams with the hope that in the future they may come true.

The editor of this page dreams of a time when the extension of the trolley lines, the improvements of the railroad service, the use of electricity and the use more and more of concrete in building will have made life on the farm comfortable, cheerful and social, will have brought the scattered farmers into close contact with each other and with the world.

Great changes do not come suddenly in the social organization of any body of people. One does not at first realize the inevitable results following some simple invention. Few persons could have foretold the influence of the invention of the cotton gin upon southern agriculture, or the invention of the reaper and mow upon agriculture in the grain regions in the North and West.

We trust that there will be a general use of electricity on the farm in the near future. As yet it is not available to any great extent, but in time it will be made available, and electricity will do a great deal of the work that we now look to the horse to do.

Then there is the concrete for building purposes. It ought to do much to protect the farm houses and farm barns from fire. Properly utilized it will do much to reduce the labor needed to keep the dairy and the barn and the kitchen and the walks about the house neat and clean.

Moreover, we dream of the time when country schools will be so good that there will be no necessity for farmers with large families moving into town to educate their children. This ought not to be a long look ahead. There should be graded schools through the rural districts with a central high school, and arrangements ought to be made by farmers through co-operation for the transportation of the children of the neighborhood to central schools which can be much more effectively organized than the widely scattered schools with one teacher for all grades.

Then there are the roads that are to be improved so that the cost of transportation may be greatly reduced and the pleasure of intercourse greatly increased.

These are the things we hope for. We do not get impatient nor do we get discouraged. We know these things are coming, but we know they can only come slowly. They will come by doing to-day's work a little better than we did it last year, cultivating our fields a little more intelligently, marketing our crops more cautiously and more profitably.

No farmer ought to be content to have his farm only in as good condition this year as it was last year. Every year ought to show some improvement. If you will lay out a plan running through five years for the rotation of crops, for the disposition of the manure on the farm, for the distribution of commercial fertilizers, you will find a steady improvement in the yield of the soil, and, in the course of a few years, you will find that the capital that your farm represents has greatly increased in value.

More and more, as we look at the situation, farming is enlisting men's intelligence. Time was when anybody could scrape the soil, plant corn and other such crops and support his family if he were industrious.

Fortunately, the family wants a better kind of support. Instead of regretting the fact that your children want to live better than you did, remember that you are living better than your parents lived. This is the spirit that we call the spirit of progress, which is the spirit of civilization. The world ought to be better as each generation passes. So ought your farm to be better when each season's labor has closed and the results secured.

This, we say, requires intelligence. You must know the laws under which crops are produced. You ought to know something concerning the sources of the soil's fertility and how to preserve that fertility and how to add to it from the atmosphere, from cultivation, from manure, from the very seeds you plant.

Do not be impatient with the suggestions that certain things may be better done by some new methods with which you are not familiar. We all get into ruts as we get older. We get impatient with change. The power of inertia is stronger as the years pass. These things discourage the young men, active, enterprising, energetic young men, and drive them to town.

Do not drive your boy to town by any such feeling of opposition. If he is called there by a love or longing for certain vocations, let him go, but do not drive him there by making him discontented with your methods or unhappy on your farm. Talk with him, learn what he knows, teach him what you know. Then if he wants to stay on the farm, help him to stay on your farm or help him to get another.

We believe that the farmer is coming into his own; that he is to get better prices for his crops, better prices for his labor. If you do not get it it must be your fault somewhere. Either you have located your farm badly or you are cultivating it badly or you do not systematize your work.

So we say, take your work seriously, do it cheerfully, learn from your neighbors and your friends, learn from the experience of others. Learn from the young people about you, and never be content unless at the end of the year you have a little balance in money and a greater balance in the value of your property.

To couple the name of a farmer, some years ago, with that of poultry giving only meant to insult him. To make mention of the fact that he was a flock grower just suited his fancy, but the poultry business, in his eyes, was exceedingly small fry. If any poultry were kept on his farm they were referred to as the property of "the old woman." He was perfectly free to let his wife's name be connected with the poultry business, selling the eggs, and she could even trade the butter for some things they had to have, provided some tobacco was among the things traded for. If there is one thing more than another for which a farmer is proverbially noted it is a good share of practical common sense. Some of them have hobbies and pet theories, which sometimes bring them a great deal of "experience," but as a rule he looks at almost everything along utility lines.

Some farmers have been looking for the best farmer's fowl; have bred almost all the breeds in existence, and yet have to confess that the real utility fowl for all farmers is as evasive as quicksilver. At times he thinks he has this much-desired bird cornered, only to find that it is still at large. The practical qualities of his wife's Sunday bonnet are well exemplified as a receptacle for gathering eggs, but a basket or a tin pail may be better. A buzz-saw is all right for the purpose for which it was intended, but it can't be used for shaving a man's head. All these things are very practical in their way, but making these things answer for all purposes is very much like corraling a cyclone—something no man has succeeded in doing.

It is the way with fowls. One person wants fowls for the production of eggs, and therefore will want the breed whose hens prove to be the best layers. Another wants the best table fowl, and an entirely different breed will be selected. The third man wants fowls with a certain fancy feather, and pays a fancy price for them. Here is a farmer who lives several miles from the nearest town, whose time is devoted to other pursuits, who cares very little or fowls of any particular kind. He recognizes the fact, however, that they are an unfailing source of supply, in case of emergency, in furnishing the table, buying the groceries and keeping him out of debt for long intervals.

We would infer, then, that the farmer's fowls essentially should be prolific layers without sacrificing other qualities. They should be good table fowls. They should sell well in the market, and to satisfy this requirement they must be of good size, easily fattened, plump and of good appearance when dressed. They must be hardy and good foragers, and if the farmer is not ready to buy an incubator the hens must be good sitters and mothers.

If one breed of fowls having the requirements named cannot be found it may be well to build separate yards and keep two kinds, and thus both demands will be filled. One breed may be laying in winter while the other is getting ready to roll out the eggs at some other season of the year. These are questions that are being studied by the careful, and each individual will have to determine the matter for himself.

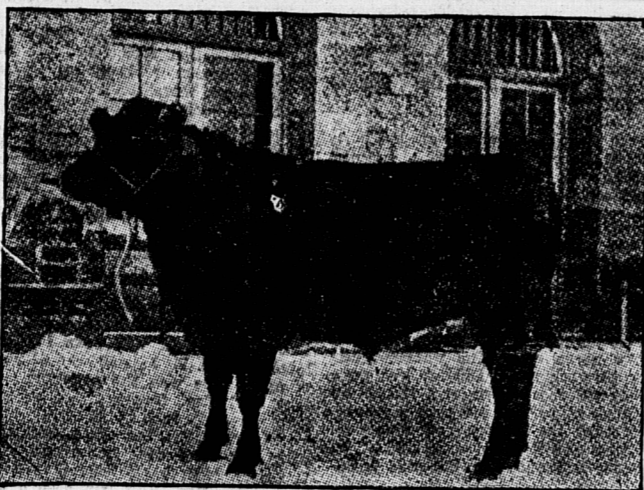
LIVE STOCK ECONOMY IN WINTER FEEDING OF THE CATTLE

Value of Straw When Properly Prepared for the Animals.

INTERESTING TO DAIRY FARMERS

(By W. R. Gilbert.)

Straw is not made the best of for fodder purposes unless chaffed and afterwards steamed or fermented. The cut straw gets partially cooked by the steaming process, and is rendered which the nutritive properties become more soluble, so that the internal organs assimilate more of them, and still another service of valuable import is rendered by a delicious aroma being excited, which tempts the appetite and makes the straw ration agreeable.



Prize Steer Exhibited at the Guelph, Ontario, Show.

thereby far more digestible, besides to the animal senses. No need for costly condiments to tickle the palate if the straw chaff part of the ration has been steamed, the fragrance and flavor excited being nature's own device, far superior and more salutary than any artificial spicing.

Of course, steaming is far more necessary when straw has been weathered, or is bad in quality from any cause, than when it is sweet and very appetizing in its original state. But even then the hard knots and woody fibers require softening by cooking to prevent indigestion, and if extra expenditure is needed it is far better to incur it in the preparation of a healthy food than to have to pay a far greater price in physic or in veterinary fees to recover animals from the ill-consequence of unwholesome dietary.

But by damping out straw and placing it in a big heap to ferment the self-same effects are produced as by steaming. A great many farmers, among them the dairy men, should be very powerful enough. This costs nothing but labor, and not much of that. After the first oration, when the fermenting has advanced, the straw should be turned over and damped again. Let the second fermentation in the whole of the chaff may be more profitably applied upon a great many other things, among them the habit of intermixing the pulp they can spare for the distillery into the chaff heap previous to fermentation, that the whole mass may be fermented and partially cooked together, the acidity which causes mangos and scours.

A practical farmer, in explaining the rationale of the practice some time since, urged that in the cooking process the raw pulp derived from the pulp of impurities to the chaff some of its nutritive properties, and that both the substances received assimilation as well as benefit. As to this, the pulp of swedes and turnips would certainly be rendered more acceptable to the gastric tastes of cattle or sheep by being cooked, and if fermented along with the chaff a small amount of nutritive property might be sent off to the atmosphere.

In the case of mangels fresh from the ground, or which have not been stored for any length of time, heating the pulp along with the chaff might prove a very advantageous for neutralizing or removing the acidity which causes mangos and scours.

This subject is likely to be of special interest to dairy farmers, who have to supply milk contracts in the winter. By the admixture even of a small quantity of raw pulp after straw chaff has been macerated in the above way, if cake or corn meal be added, the milk will be more plentiful and the season, if critical, will be lifted over without difficulty.

THE SETTING OF HENS.

How to set hens seems to be a simple question, but it is safe to say, says an authority, that one-half of the failures in hatching and raising chickens with hens is due to the fact that we did not know how.

In the first place, one cannot set hens in the hen house where other hens have access to the nest. If we do, those that want to lay will crowd into the nest, and either break the eggs or keep the other hen from returning until the eggs have been chilled.

An ordinary soap box makes a good nest for a setting hen. All you need to do is to cut out a small opening in the side so that the hen can step into the nest without breaking the eggs. It will also be necessary to provide a temporary top and front, so that when the hen is first taken to the nest she may be kept there for at least one day. These boxes may be arranged around the wall and the food and water can be placed in the centre of the room. Arrange a few nests in advance, and after the hen has begun to set remove her after dark to the room. Carry her gently with head tucked under your arm, set your lantern in front of nest and let her slip gently on the nest eggs which have already been placed there. Cover the top and front of box and do not disturb her on any one day. On the second day, remove the front and give the hen a chance to come out and eat and drink.

POULTRY MORE ABOUT FEEDING OF HENS FOR WINTER EGGS

No Other Problem Has Been So Difficult of Solution.

TWO IMPORTANT ESSENTIALS.

(By A. B. James.)

No other problem in my experience has been so difficult of solution as to how to feed for winter eggs. Two things are necessary: First, proper food and care; second, a strong constitution—one that will enable the fowls to digest and assimilate large amounts of feed. The fowl that receives the least care and attention lay most of their eggs in the spring. The weather is warm, they have plenty of green food, more or less grain and in-



Prize Steer Exhibited at the Guelph, Ontario, Show.

High spirited and free going horses are apt to dash up hills, but if a sound animal is to be kept between the shafts, they must be checked and made to moderate their pace.

Then the foolish and dangerous practice of suddenly touching up a harness horse with the whip when mounting a steep hill has only too often been followed by accident. Many a horse has been thus started, and in the attempt to increase his pace, has lost his foothold and fallen, the sequel usually being a pair of badly broken knees.

Then, again, there are those inflammatory conditions of the skin covering the legs and back of the horse, called mud fever and cracked heels. Perhaps there is no more fruitful cause of these diseases than the practice of washing horses' legs when they come from work, more especially if this washing is done outside the stable in frosty weather. Experience has proved that the best way to remove the mud from the legs and feet is to wipe the superficial mud with a whisp of straw, and to wait till the remainder is quite dry, when the legs may well be brushed out. On no account whatever should the legs of horses be habitually washed with soap and water. This will also prevent the formation of mud fever by removing the hair that drains away the water, a valuable protection to the skin beneath it taken away. Your horse may not appear so smart with his stockings left on, but it is much better to be on the right side and sacrifice a little appearance.

As a word on the subject of clipping horses all over. When you take away a horse's natural coat, never forget to provide him with a substitute. It is no common sight to see a horse standing in some vehicle shivering and shaking all over for want of a rug. Apart from the inconvenience and suffering of the animal, it is a waste of the investment of a few dollars in a good rug is certainly more business like than risking the chances of running up a long veterinary bill.

Poll evil, an inflammation of the horse's poll, very liable to the formation of deep seated abscesses, may be prevented, since the principal causes of this complaint are hard and badly fitting head straps, and horses hitting their heads against the beams of low ceilings and doorways. An arrow or stick will do more to cure such accidents as fracture of the hip, which may also be caused by a horse running against a doorpost when allowed to run out on the shafts of a vehicle immediately he finds himself unharnessed. In the case of two-wheel rigs, after all the buckles and straps are free, it is better to push the vehicle from the horse, than let the horse walk out of the shafts.

Affections of the stomach and bowels brought on by incorrect feeding and watering are far too numerous for mention. To reduce as much as possible the number of accidents happening to horses at grass see that their hind shoes are removed, to prevent serious injury by kicks, and keep your horses as far away from ditches and barbed wire as you can.

There are a number of small accidents, such as wounds and bruises, which may be avoided by keeping your eyes open, and seeing that your horse cannot injure himself in the stable by coming in contact with sharp pieces of wood or iron. In conclusion, never allow smoking in the stable; be careful where you put the matches that have been lighted, and provide all artificial lights with wire shields in order to prevent as far as possible that most terrible of all accidents—fire.

Fowls will be the result. This is the class of birds that pays. There is no faith in regulation quantities of feed. It is impossible to gauge the requirements exactly. The best plan is to see that there is enough for all. They cannot feed freely, take away the dishes until the next feeding time. Empty the food left in them and have the vessels cleaned, for some of the soft foods, if left from meal to meal, will become sour and be likely to bring disease. When grain is strewn about the fowls in their yard no more should be thrown down than is eaten at one time, or some of it will be wasted. Fens with full liberty need not be fed oftener than twice a day. A supply of clean water is absolutely indispensable. After an open water fountain is used for watering, it should be frequently cleaned and refilled. I always give my birds warm water to drink in winter.

THE HORSE SOME DISEASES AND ACCIDENTS TO MAN'S FRIEND

Mismanagement and Carelessness Responsible for Much Trouble.

OPEN EYES PREVENT MUCH.

(By W. R. Gilbert.)

Although it is true that accidents will happen and diseases make their appearance in the best regulated stables, mismanagement and carelessness are accountable for quite a large number of the cases a veterinarian is called in to treat.

Now since the battle against disease consists in first finding out the cause, and then removing it, the prevention of this class of maladies is by no means a difficult task. The first I will mention is a swelling which makes its appearance about five inches below the point of the hock due to a sprain of a mass of ligamentous fibres connecting the heads of the cannon and splint bones with four bones of the hock, known as curb. A common cause of this accident amongst light horses is the reckless pace some drivers send their horses up hills. It may be taken for granted when this mischievous way of driving is indulged in below, that it will be a matter of only a very short time before a curb makes its appearance.

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AGRICULTURE CLEARING FARMS OF THE ALWAYS OBNOXIOUS WEEDS

Control Is Not Difficult If Fight Is Persistently Kept Up.

CLEAN SEED THE MAIN THING.

(By S. B. Hartman.)

The control of noxious weeds on cultivated ground is not so difficult if persistently followed up. The chief factors are clean seed, preventing infection from neighboring farms by wind, water, animals, or threshing machines, and a vigorous campaign against the weeds now in the fields, allowing none of the noxious ones to go to seed.

Comparatively clean seed can be secured by growing clean seed and reseeded by thorough cleaning and reseeded with the mill, set so as to retain not more than one-fourth to one-half of the seed passed through. In this way the large, heavy weeds, such as are sown and weed seeds almost entirely excluded. One should also be very careful to get clean clover and grass seed by growing them on a reputable farm. We should also see that noxious weeds are put in roads and neighboring premises, for we keep them from blossoming time by thorough cleaning and reseeded with the mill, set so as to retain not more than one-fourth to one-half of the seed passed through. In this way the large, heavy weeds, such as are sown and weed seeds almost entirely excluded. One should also be very careful to get clean clover and grass seed by growing them on a reputable farm. 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