

Agricultural News

P. E. I. Department of Agriculture
THE IMPORTANCE OF HUMUS

Humus may be defined roughly as vegetable matter in an advanced stage of decay. If well drained soils are to be highly productive they must contain about 4 per cent of this active organic matter. It supports the micro-organisms which are so important in releasing the plant food materials in the soil. In addition, it makes the soil more retentive of moisture in dry weather, prevents it from becoming crusted after rain, helps to give it the crumbly texture referred to as good tilth and renders its surface more resistant to shee erosion.

The analysis of 500 samples of soil taken from various parts of the Province shows that 80 per cent of island soils under cultivation are low in humus, and that some are very low.

To maintain this humus content at the desired level, not only regular applications of organic matter are required, but good cultural practices as well. Summer tillage of soil hastens the decay and disappearance of organic matter. Therefore, cultivated crops should be alternated with grass which not only conserves humus but adds to it by producing a large amount of organic matter in the form of roots.

Among the many forms of organic matter which may be applied to the soil, the most important are: manure, compost, trash mulches, cover crops and organic deposits such as peat and muck.

Manure - Of the foregoing, manure is the most valuable. It supplies large quantities of plant food in addition to concentrated organic matter. The annual production of manure from the present livestock population of Prince Edward Island, exclusive of bedding, is estimated at about one and a half million tons. The crop nutrients it contains would be equivalent to 27,000 tons of ammonium nitrate, 17,500 tons of superphosphate and 12,500 tons of muriate of potash. The value of these plant nutrients at present prices would amount to four and a half million dollars which is twice the amount spent for commercial fertilizer each year.

It is unfortunate, however, that owing to loss from various causes, only a small part of the crop producing and soil-conserving value of manure is realized. Some of these losses cannot be avoided but many are preventable. One source of enormous loss is the failure to save the liquid excreta which, on the average, contains about 40 per cent of the nitrogen and 60 per cent of the potash. This loss can be prevented to a large extent by having the stable floor and gutter tight enough to prevent seepage, and by using a good bedding of straw, shavings, sawdust, peat or any other absorbent material. There are many other losses which the observant farmer may note and prevent, but space will not permit of their being discussed here. However, with the general low fertility of our island soils in mind, great emphasis should be laid on the necessity of caring for manure from the time it is voided until it is incorporated with the soil.

Composts - Frequently it is not possible to use all the straw and other crop residues as roughage and bedding for livestock. Consequently, they are often wasted or worse still, burned. By composting these materials, however, they will produce valuable organic matter for the soil. Straw spoiled hay, etc. when composted with fertilizer or manure, if available, supply organic matter closely approaching soil humus. The addition of the fertilizer provides for the needs of the micro-organisms which cause decomposition.

Trash Mulches - A trash mulch consisting of straw, weeds, hay, etc. is sometimes used as a sheet compost. It is particularly good on exposed soils that are subject to surface run-off and sheet erosion. It may be spread over the land in fall and disced in. Fertilizer, especially nitrogen, should be applied in spring as a supply for the growing crops.

Cover Crops - As referred to here, a cover crop means any crop shown for the protection of the soil during fall and winter months. The advantage of a cover crop may be summarized as:

- (1) Protects the soil particles from disintegration by the pounding action of rain.
- (2) Reduces surface run-off and thus protects the soil from sheet erosion.
- (3) Protects the soil against drifting in winter.
- (4) Prevents the leaching of available plant food, especially nitrate nitrogen.
- (5) When turned under, adds organic matter to the soil.
- (6) Increases the water holding capacity of the soil.
- (7) May provide early spring pasture.

The disadvantages are: (1) Expense of seeding, and cost of turning under. (2) The cost of seed and the uncertainty of getting a good stand. (3) The possibility of depressing the growth of the following crop.

In backward spring weather the young crop and the organisms causing the decay of the cover crop may have to compete for the limited supply of available nitrogen. To guard against this a nitrogenous fertilizer should be applied before seeding in spring. Peat and Muck - Among the many sources of organic matter which might help to restore the humus content of our soils are the deposits of peat, muck and silt found in the Province. As determined by the reconnaissance survey, they occupy an area of more than 8,800 acres. Though these materials are not used to any extent at present, because of the labour involved, they have been used in the past, with good results, especially for the production of potatoes and grass on light land. Usually these are composed of peat, muck, dried and used spread about the barnyard where they become mixed with surplus straw, seaweed or waste material. As these deposits are strongly acid, high in organic matter and

nitrogen, low in available nitrogen and very low in phosphoric acid and potash, a complete fertilizer and lime should be used as supplements.

Excerpt from "Soil Conservation and Related Problems in Prince Edward Island"

"CUTTING CORNERS" - Not long ago, the writer of this article visited a farmer whom he thought might have a cow for sale at a reasonable price. There was a cow for sale alright, but she was giving milk, as we like it, from three quarters only while from a hard, swollen fourth quarter came a watery coloured substance in small quantity.

The story behind the swollen, infected quarter was that the quarter had swollen just previous to drying off last winter. The farmer didn't call in a qualified Veterinarian but let her go dry in the hope that the infected quarter would clean up itself during the dry period. However, upon calving the cow was found to still be plagued with the same old trouble, mastitis, so the farmer called in a friend who knew how to administer treatment. However, the drug used was given in doses which were too small to adequately cope with the situation. This, neither the farmer nor the farmer's friend were aware of and, as a result, a good cow has lost a quarter which could have been saved by proper treatment.

The next time "you" have trouble in "your" herd it may not pay you to try and cut corners either remember, get the advice of a qualified Veterinarian in the long run it will pay off!

Treatment is applicable particularly to attacks of acute mastitis and to injuries to the point of the teat, which lead almost invariably to result in chronic mastitis infection. To be effective, any treatment must be applied at the first sign of trouble.

There is no "cut and dried" method of treatment which is uniformly effective in all cases of acute mastitis. Various factors have to be considered which can only be determined by a veterinarian. If a veterinarian is not immediately available, the farmer must do what he can along the following lines: Bathe the affected quarter gently with hot water for half an hour three or four times daily, which drying thoroughly, apply hot antiseptic and a suspensory bandage to relieve the weight of the udder; keep the cow blanketed and as quiet as possible; remove the germ-laden milk from the quarter frequently, taking care that the udder tissue is not injured as little as possible; never massage the udder or give an acute attack; reduce the amount of concentrates and feed lightly twice daily with bran mashes containing one-half ounce of saltpetre, but avoid the use of drastic cathartics such as Epsom salts.

Injuries to the point of the teat should be treated promptly by soaking the teat in a disinfectant solution such as potassium permanganate 1-4 teaspoonful to 1 quart of water. Use an egg cup to apply the solution to the point of the teat, holding it there for five minutes. After soaking the teat thoroughly apply an antiseptic ointment such as iodized vaseline. Do not use teat tubes or teat dilators under any circumstances.

LOCKJAW - Prompt and proper care given to animals stricken with lockjaw often gives them a fighting chance to recover, the American Foundation for Animal Health reports today.

Lockjaw, also known as tetanus, often follows a germ infection of a wound. The trouble is caused by a poison given off by a germ called Clostridium tetani while it is multiplying in the living animal. This poison is believed to be over one hundred times stronger than strychnine. It affects the various motor nerves of the body to account for the stiffening and rigid paralysis which characterizes lockjaw.

A veterinarian's diagnosis is necessary because the symptoms of lockjaw may be confused with many other diseases affecting the nervous system.

Symptoms usually appear a week or two after the original infection of the wound, the Foundation says, and include the inability of the animal to open its mouth. Stiffness then spreads to the rest of the body. However, incubation stage may be shorter, or may be as long as two or three months. On farms where tetanus is known to exist, preventive vaccination of valuable animals with tetanus toxoid is often advisable.

TEST MARKS

Competition between 4-H calf club members in Kings and Queens Counties for top marks continues to be very keen. Top marks given for the test on work done in April and May are as follows: Lorne MacFarlane, Brackley Point, 98 per cent; Clara MacLellan, St. Georges, 97 per cent; AnnChristina, Rollo Bay East, 92 per cent; Isabel MacCallum, Brackley Point, 89 per cent.

The two top marks given for Judging in Kings County for the

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ENGAGEMENT - Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Harvey, Searleton, announce the engagement of their daughter Florence Rowena to Donald Harvey, son of Mr. and Mrs. Jack Costain, St. Louis. Marriage to take place, August 20th.

ENGAGEMENT - Mr. and Mrs. J. Stewart Ross, Flat River, announce the engagement of their daughter Kathleen Marian to Robert Cameron, son of Mr. and Mrs. John R. Ross, Pinette. Marriage to take place August 31st.

ENGAGEMENT - Mr. and Mrs. George Buchanan of Fredericton announce the engagement of their daughter Catherine Hazel to Ian Harold, son of Mr. Norman MacRae and the late Mrs. MacRae of Wheatley River. Marriage to take place in September.

FREE CHURCH of Scotland Communion Services, August 14, Murray 10:30 a.m., and 7:30 p.m., Preparatory services Thursday, August 11, Friday, August 12, and Saturday, August 13, at 8 p.m. Rev. Clement Graham of Tain Scotland, will assist at these services. Rev. J. H. Bishop, Interim Moderator.

POLICE COURT - An Ontario resident, charged with operating a motor vehicle while intoxicated, was remanded to August 10 when he appeared in City Police Court yesterday morning. Two vagrants were each sentenced to 20 days by Magistrate K. M. Martin. One drunk and incapable was sentenced to 20 days, one was remanded to August 10, one to August 13, and a fourth to August 15.

Personals

Mr. Earle Somers of Bayfield, N. B. spent the week-end at his home in Bonshaw.

Mr. W. Leard Simpson of Bayfield, N. B. visited his family over the week-end, at his home in Bonshaw.

Miss Jean Macdonald, 93 Weymouth St., who has been vacationing in U. S. A. has returned to her home in Charlottetown.

Miss Margaret Somers, Bonshaw had as her recent guests her son Roy with his wife and daughter, Vera, also Mr. and Mrs. Stewart Clements and three children, Alexander, Joan and Marleen of White Sands, P. E. I.

Mr. and Mrs. Norman A. Mortimer, with their daughter Mrs. Carl A. Carlson and Mr. Carlson, also the latter's son Norman, are visiting the island for a week's holiday from their home in Lexington, Mass.

month of June are as follows: Garth Coffin, Head of Hillsboro 86 per cent; Wayne Cameron, Head of Hillsboro 82 per cent.

The two top marks given for Judging in Kings County for the month of July are as follows: Anthony Mullally, Gowan Brae, 87 per cent; Doreen MacCormack, Gowan Brae, 86 per cent.

The regular meeting of the O'Leary 4-H Potato Club was held at the home of Mr. A. W. Raynor, O'Leary on Thursday, July 21st, with six (6) members and two (2) visitors present.

Before the regular business of the meeting was conducted, the club members visited the seed potato plot of Mr. Raynor's. Much valuable information was given to the members regarding different potato diseases and ten different varieties of potatoes were studied by all members.

The next regular meeting will be held at the home of Wayne Locke on Thursday, August 11 at 8:15 p.m.

The meeting adjourned.
Secretary - Sheldon MacLean

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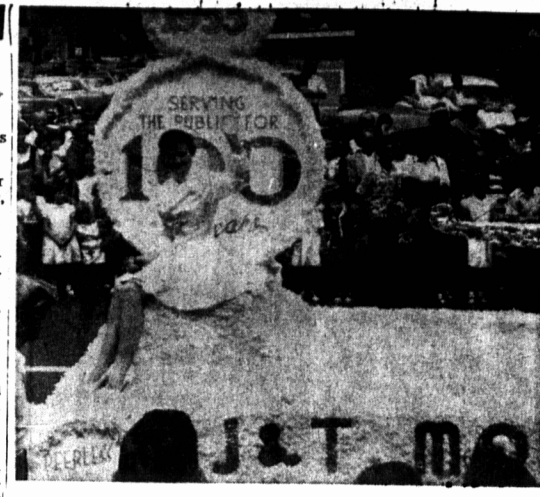
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PICTURESQUE GIRL GUIDE FLOAT

Very picturesque was the float of fire toasting marshmallows, the Girl Guides. They seemed to be quite at home at their camp



PONY POPULAR WITH KIDDIES

Kiddies shouted with glee when cart and parasol all were part of an entry from Clear View Farm little foal behind. The basket

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