

## Defects of the Hog Market

EDITOR FARMER'S ADVOCATE :

With the prices quoted in Winnipeg at this date, (September 6th) \$8.00 per cwt., the local buyer is offering \$7.00 for selects and \$6.00 for heavies, weighing over 250 pounds. I am selling some this week at \$7.00, but the trouble is there are very few hogs for sale, and a carlot cannot be bought, consequently the car has to be partitioned and the balance filled with cattle. If the weather is hot less stock can be put in the car. Freight cost comes to at least  $\frac{1}{2}$  cent per pound and the shrinkage, weighed off the car, is  $\frac{1}{4}$  cent per pound more, so the local buyer has a half-cent profit to collect a shipment over a large stretch of country.

One of the worst features of the Winnipeg live stock market is this compelling the shipper to sell everything off cars. True, one of the Winnipeg firms stated at the Brandon Winter Fair that water was of no use to them and they would lower the price if hogs were sold full of water, but quote both prices as is done in Toronto, so the shipper may take his choice. Now, he sells as soon as possible after arrival to avoid any more shrinkage. When stock is two days in transit (and I have known cars to be four days running from here to Winnipeg, a distance of 283 miles), it certainly is against the interest of the producer to sell off the cars, for the shipper comes back on the producer.

Then another feature of the Winnipeg market is that the shipper comes in with not only a mixed type of hogs, but in many cases several kinds of cattle in the same car, and he refuses to break bulk, and, therefore, must sell all to one firm, thereby compelling the firm to buy what they do not want in order to get what they do want. I believe it is in the interests of the producer to have each kind of stock and grade put on the market by itself, and the man who produces the high quality hogs would reap a reward instead of having to average up with the man with the thick, fat, old sows or stags, and there are times when any firm can handle the lower grades if they could buy a quantity and not have to take something they did not want that week.

Sask.

A. B. POTTER.

## FARM

### Topics for Discussion

To afford an opportunity for the interchange of ideas, and to provide a place where information may be given and received, we publish each week at the head of this department a list of topics, which our readers are invited to discuss. Opposite each topic is the date of publication of contributions on it, and readers are reminded that articles contributed on any of the subjects given, must be in our hands at least ten days earlier than the subject is scheduled for discussion in our columns.

Readers will understand that this department of the paper is theirs. They are invited to write the editor, freely expressing their opinion of the manner in which it is conducted and to suggest topics. If any reader has in mind a question which he or she may think can be profitably discussed, it will be given a place in the order of subjects, if it is deemed of sufficient general interest. Because this notice stands at the head of the Farm Department does not mean that farm questions, only, may be taken up. The discussions will cover every phase of agriculture.

For the best article received on each topic we will award a first prize of Three Dollars, and for the Second best, Two Dollars, paying the latter sum for other contributions on the subject published in the same issue.

Articles should not exceed 500 words.

October 6.—What has been your experience in marketing eggs and poultry through commission merchants? Do you find such method of selling satisfactory?

October 13.—What is the most expedient way of harvesting a root crop? How do you store the roots? Under average conditions how late in the winter or spring are the roots fit for feeding to stock?

October 20.—How would you proceed to fit a team of farm horses for sale in order to get the

maximum price? Discuss particularly the diet provided and the exercise and general care needed as well as the time taken to make horses in average working condition fit for market.

October 27.—What is your experience as to the keeping quality of butter made in Western Canada? What do you consider the reason for so much butter going off flavor within a short time after it is made? Outline important details that help to overcome the defect.

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Our worst perennial weeds yield to persistent cultivation. Canadian blue grass, that tough, wiry, underground-rootstock creeper, which gives so much trouble on grain-and-hay farms in heavy-clay districts, can be effectually held in check by a short rotation, bringing corn after sod, followed by grain liberally seeded to clover. Even those two pernicious weeds, bindweed and perennial sow thistle, can be worn out by a summer of thorough surface cultivation preventing them from showing more than a day or so at a time above ground. While at first the cultivation may actually seem to benefit the plants, perseverance will have its reward about August or September, and a second year will complete the work, if the first does not. If the weeds are not too bad this cultivation may be given with a crop of corn in hills, or rape, but bad cases of bindweed are probably best treated with a summer-fallow.

### Alkali Land

An Oak Lake reader writes : "I have many patches of alkali soil on my farm. They are not producing a crop and are unsightly. Can you recommend any way of using such land?"

Professor S. A. Bedford's advice is : Alkali is generally associated with wet land and when the land is drained the alkali largely disappears. If, however, it is impossible to get rid of it by this means, you might try brome or Western rye grass. If the alkali is not too strong brome will give large returns. It will, however, be advisable to break up the land and disc it well before sowing the grass seed. I have never succeeded in getting a catch of cultivated grass without plowing up the sod. At the Manitoba Agricultural College mangels are doing well this year on very alkali soil where oats have always failed to grow. Mangels are relished by all kinds of farm stock and give large returns in this country. Would it not be well to try this useful crop on some of your land next year? Sow in rows about May 15th and thin to nine inches apart in the row.

### An Advocate of Brome

EDITOR FARMER'S ADVOCATE :

Personally, I have never grown brome, but am contemplating doing so, unless I can find something better. I have, however, handled the grass, have watched the results obtained by many farmers and discussed it generally with men who have and who are growing it. The majority of growers give brome more abuse than recommendation. But I am not entirely satisfied that in all cases brome was at fault. The chief objections to the grass are that it soon chokes out and the yield becomes very light that it is sometimes like the wild oat, hard to get rid of and easy to spread, that it is very hard to cure for hay.

While there seems to be a good deal of truth in these objections. I think there are several good points in brome's favor which go to counteract these defects. It generally yields two or three good heavy crops of hay, gives a very fine pasture, and the sod can be broken up for grain crop, the root matter and fibre making an old piece of land nearly as good as new. These points I consider in the brome's favor. Then I have seen brome put the weeds out of action in one of the worst weed-infested fields I ever saw. No doubt many of the weeds would come again when the land is re-broken, but it would certainly give a man an excellent opportunity to keep them pretty well killed down and possibly exterminate them altogether.

If brome were always cut before it ripened or fed down in cases of pasturage, there would be very little trouble about its spreading. I know one farmer who always did this with a twenty acre field and he has little or no brome on any other part of his farm. He broke this field in 1907, and had a bumper crop of wheat last fall. I think the land was in grass eight or nine years. All the brome that I have reference to has been grown on land that runs from a light to a medium loam.

I expect to learn a lot more about brome after June 30th; but at present I think the balance weighs in its favor.

Sask.

DRAG HARROW.

### Stooking Fodder Corn

A Neepawa subscriber writes : "I have several acres of fodder corn. Please give directions for stooking it."

Fodder corn can be preserved in excellent condition if properly stooked, or it can be spoiled if the stooking is improperly done. In stooking corn we should aim to preserve the fodder from injury by rain or snow and also to keep it from fermenting. First make a corn horse, which is simply a 2 x 4 scantling, 14 feet long, with two legs nailed on one end and a hole bored near the center for a round stick such as a broom handle to be placed loosely through. Start the stook by placing a sheaf or armful of fodder at each corner of the horse until the stook will stand alone, then draw out the broom handle and remove the horse. Then complete the stook by placing enough corn on every side evenly until about 400 or 500 pounds are in each stook. Then draw the very top of it tightly together with a rope and ring and tie with double binder twine.

Be sure to draw the cord tight; keep the ties near the top and make the stooks large. If these directions are followed the stooks will stay erect all winter and shed both snow and rain and at the same time remain sufficiently open to prevent fermentation. The fodder from such shocks should keep bright and sweet until spring. Horses as well as cattle thrive on well cured corn fodder and immense crops can be grown by proper management.

S. A. BEDFORD, M. A. C.

### Summer Fallowing for Winter Wheat

EDITOR FARMER'S ADVOCATE :

Early in the spring is the proper time to begin the work of summer fallowing. As soon as the ground can be worked at all, it is a good practice to double disc all stubble land intended for summer fallow. This serves a double purpose. One is that it thoroughly breaks the surface and closes the pores or small cracks which are always present in the spring, through which the moisture escapes very rapidly. By this means a great amount of moisture may be saved, which, in Southern Alberta means much toward a good crop. We are not blessed with as much rainfall every season at least as our brother farmers are in the northern part of the province.

Another point is that disking will cover all the seeds, both weeds and grain, that might have lain there since last harvest. As soon as the warmer days come they are ready to sprout and grow. This may be in May. By the middle of June, or perhaps sooner, according to the season, there will be more than likely a pretty good stand of something; either weeds or grain, perhaps both. This must not be allowed to grow until it has sapped all the moisture out of the land, but should be double disced again. This second disking practically destroys all the volunteer grain or weeds and also leaves the land with a good mulch, thus taking care of the moisture and leaving the area in first class shape to begin plowing, which should not be delayed longer than the first of July.

Plow a good deep furrow, being sure to avoid the cut and cover act. While plowing it is an excellent plan to harrow the plowed land well as you go, either by leading an extra horse hitched to one section of good heavy lever harrow, or by having harrow attached to the frame of the plow so that it will work within one or two feet of the furrow. Give the teeth of the harrow a pretty good slant so as to give them while passing over the surface a downward pressure. This has a tendency to pack the soil firmly. It also leaves the surface of the ground in very good shape.

As soon as the plowing is finished, for fear we have not harrowed quite enough, go over it again, single if you like but if double all the better. Always have the teeth of the harrow in a slanting position.

This land is in prime condition now for seeding to winter wheat which should be drilled in about the middle of August. But if you are intending to hold it over and put in a spring crop, be sure to harrow it over thoroughly a time or two more before seeding it. Some of your readers may think that instead of having wheels in my head, that I have harrows on the brain. But be that as it may, too much harrowing is just right, for should there come a nice rain between the time the land is in shape and the time of seeding, just as soon as the surface is dry enough to allow your teams on it try harrowing it once more. Single harrowing is good in this case.

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