



CLARKE
COUNTY
AGRICULTURAL
ASSN.
SPRINGFIELD
OHIO.

es Twice the
on horses—a
anything else
ccess for mas-
Plowed Land.
Stubble Fields
e name "BIS-
without it. For
etured by
ORA, ONT.
oklet w"

The Farmer's Advocate and Home Magazine

"Persevere and
Succeed."

Established
1866.

REGISTERED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COPYRIGHT ACT OF 1875.

VOL. XLI.

LONDON, ONT., AND WINNIPEG, MAN., FEBRUARY 15, 1906.

No. 699

EDITORIAL.

What is Your Rotation?

It is quite generally admitted that a rotation of crops is necessary to secure the best yields and maintain soil fertility. Planting the same crop in a field year after year is nearly always bad practice, whether it be wheat, roots or corn. Not only so, but by many of our best men in Ontario that system of farming is considered at fault which calls for two cereal crops in succession, or for corn, potatoes or roots after grain. A systematic short rotation will give a clover or clover-and-timothy sod to plow under every three or four years—in summer or fall for roots, and in fall or spring for peas, corn, rape and other fodder crops. The peas and hoed crops in turn are the very best ones to precede grain, the fine state of tilth brought about being especially favorable to the maturing of a good kernel, and also to the securing of a good catch of clover, to which the grain should usually if not always be seeded. The clover then replenishes the humus and gathers atmospheric nitrogen, some of which is added directly to the soil by plowing under the clover sward, while an additional quota comes back indirectly through the manure made by the stock that has eaten the clover in meadow or stable. And, by the way, it is not out of place to remind our readers here that manure from cattle fed on clover, bran and oil meal is a good deal richer in the elements of fertility than that from cattle fed timothy hay and corn.

A short rotation in which clover enters frequently is the best means of providing nourishing food for stock, as well as adding nitrogen to the soil and keeping it full of that indispensable element, humus (decayed vegetable matter), so important in preserving a good physical condition. A soil without humus loses plant food, by leaching and in other ways, is hard to work, and unsatisfactory in every way. Rotation with clover is the remedy, and in order that it be not neglected, each farmer should evolve in his mind a systematic rotation. Haphazard change of crop is not rotation, though it is decidedly preferable to no change at all. A rotation should be founded on scientific principles, which we cannot fully discuss in this article, but, in a word, the aim should be: Manure and sod for the fodder crops, fine tilth for the cereals, and clover-seeding with every crop of grain. Circumstances may occasion a departure from any ideal system, but it is well to have one by which to work. We venture the opinion that many farms, for lack of a good rotation, are losing more fertility each year than a good team could haul all winter in the form of manure from a neighboring town.

A rotation is the best means of combating weeds. Those not subdued by the grain may be smothered by clover, those that survive the clover may be cultivated out of the corn or roots, and the mustard that comes up with the following crop of grain may be hand-pulled, or killed by spraying with copper sulphate. Few weeds will survive a short rotation practiced by an energetic farmer.

Having indicated the importance of a systematic short rotation, the next thing is to offer a good one. Here we are confronted with the fact that no rotation can be laid down that is

best or even practicable for all, and as our aim is not to suggest ideas of advantage merely to a few, but to render the greatest possible service to the rank and file of farmers, surrounded as they are with varying local conditions of soil, climate, markets, size of farm, and so on, we conclude that it will be more widely instructive for some of our readers to give their experience first, covering in detail the methods they now practice, together with reasons, and, maybe, suggestions as to possible or intended improvements. We should like to hear from at least one man in every county of Ontario, Quebec and the Maritime Provinces.

Could we suggest a means by which every farmer could get fifty loads of good manure for nothing, nearly every reader would jump to it. Here in this rotation idea we have a simple, less laborious, and quite as effective way of gaining fertility, and it may well be a question at this season in the mind of each one of us: What is the best rotation I can adopt?

Let the Boy Help to Manage the Farm.

"How to Keep the Boy on the Farm," is a subject on which changes have been rung until it is almost in order to apologize for mentioning it again. One of the stock-in-trade adjurations of Farmers' Institute speakers has been to give the boy a colt, calf or lamb to raise, said animal to remain Johnny's exclusive property on reaching maturity, and the proceeds to go into his pocket, not his father's. At this juncture the address is usually punctuated with applause, even the boys approving a scheme by which they might get a little pin money for their very own. But as for such a plan doing anything worth while to keep the boys on the farm—well, any boy who could be kept on the farm by a premium of that sort, would be very little use to it if he did stay. Apart from its futility, such a scheme is objectionable on the ground that it tends to perpetuate in the juvenile mind a prevalent misconception as to the relation between income and profit. A hazy notion is held by many that so long as no feed is bought for an animal, its selling price represents pretty nearly all gain, overlooking the fact that the feed has or should have an actual cash value; that interest, labor and taxes must come out before profit is reckoned; and that only by close attention to details can the feeding be made to show any real profit at all. If the boy were to keep an account of the feed, allow his father fair value therefor, and keep only the balance of the proceeds, the above objection would not apply. The boy might not have much to show for his labor, but his father could afford to let him keep several animals on these terms, and it would ground the boy in business principles, teaching him that it is not all dividend that goes to market, that profit is the comparatively narrow margin between cost of production and selling prices—a margin that must be watched with eagle eye, and the very best methods studied to increase it, if the farm account is to balance on the right side. Some will be afraid of discouraging the boy, but if he can be discouraged by knowing the truth, the sooner it happens the better. The young mind is hopeful; if it does not find the first operation profitable it will strive to improve, and the net result will be to discover more economical methods of production. Let the young people come early to

look at things in their true light; let them get down to bed-rock business principles, and there will be less likelihood of young men leaving the farm because of inability to make it pay.

But if the above plan is good, how much better would it be to give the boy an interest in the management of the whole farm? There are boys whose fathers scarcely ever consult them about the farm work. The father says, "We'll do so and so," and the boy's business is to obey. Sometimes he ventures a suggestion, but the parent never thinks of asking the son's opinion in laying out the work. Such cases may not be numerous, but they do exist, and a greater or less degree of this attitude is exhibited by men who think themselves very considerate. When, eventually, the father's death, the son's removal, or something else, causes full responsibility to devolve suddenly upon the young man, he is handicapped by lack of that initiative self-reliance which he should have been gradually acquiring. A life-long servant makes a poor master. But the boy should be treated as a partner, not merely for the sake of the experience it gives him, but for the interest it inspires. Even men work far better in carrying out what they have helped to plan, and how much more does this apply to the boy? Let a boy have a voice in running the farm, and if he is the kind worth keeping on it, he will at once evince a new interest in the work. No longer will he do the chores to get through and have some fun; he will feed, bed and water the stock to make it thrive. No longer will he want to let the dog run the cows; he'll drive them quietly, so they may let down the full mess of milk. No longer will he spud thistles to get the job done; he'll do it to clean the farm. No longer will he try to get away from the farm; he will feel a pride in it and an ambition to add improvements, increase its fertility and get a better class of stock thereon. Boys are naturally ambitious, enterprising, enthusiastic. Older men are liable to lack these motive influences; they need some one around to suggest new things and keep the farm practice from dropping into ruts. Of course, boys lack the ballast of experience; they need to be held in, but let it be done, not with a pull on a double-twisted bit, but with the gentle touch of considerate direction. Don't drive the boy—lead him. When he gets on the track of a fresh idea, don't throw cold water on it because it is new. Investigate. The first silo in our neighborhood was built as the result of persistent agitation by a sixteen-year-old reader of "The Farmer's Advocate." The same lad was instrumental in introducing many other good ideas, such as underdraining, rotation of crops, and other things, on account of which the farm is very much more valuable to-day. Boys often have better ideas than they are given credit for, and sometimes remarkably sound judgment, being untrammelled by the customs and prejudices of the past. Don't think it necessary to keep the boy down and disparage his suggestions whenever possible. Some people, fearing, apparently, that their boys will get to know too much, take special pains to arrest any tendency towards "swelled head," incipient symptoms of which are naturally in evidence about the age of sixteen to twenty-one. But isn't it best to let the boy make a few not too costly mistakes now and then, and find out for himself that there are wrinkles he may yet learn from experienced men?

Take the boy into your confidence in the management of the farm. Plan with him, and he will work with you. Let him feel a proprietary interest in the place, and he will cease to chafe under the parental yoke. The farm will be good for the boy, and the boy will be good for the farm.