

Farm and Home.

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PUBLISHED

SEMI-MONTHLY

(1st and 15th of each month)

BY THE PHELPS PUBLISHING CO.

Entered at postoffice as second-class matter. TERMS—50 cents a year, 25 cents for six months, payable in advance, clubs of two or more, 50c per year. New subscriptions can begin at any time during the year. Sample copies free.

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In the Potato Harvest.

Mid-Summer Farming.

SAVING THE SOIL MOISTURE.

Capillary action, or movement of water in the soil is due to the tension of soil particles. If the particles are coarse, the action is weak and the soil cannot hold much water. If the particles are fine and the soil compact, the capillary action is strong and a large amount of water will be held unless lost by evaporation. Moisture may be retained in the soil by subsolling, plowing, harrowing, cultivating, mulching, rolling, and by the addition of humus or decayed vegetable matter. Subsoiling increases the depth of clayey and compact soils and allows more water to enter them instead of running off on the surface. Subsoiling is thus an important means of preventing washing, and it also enables the roots to penetrate deeper, thus increasing the feeding area. Both spring and fall subsoiling are of advantage on stiff, heavy land.

Plowing is an important factor in saving soil moisture. The reason why lands wash so seriously is that the plowing is too shallow and it is frequently done when the soil is in an unfit condition. The plow should be run as deep as possible, being set slightly lower each year until the top soil is 8 or 10 in deep. The best plowing is that which leaves the soil in the finest state of division. Cloddy or lumpy land cannot hold a large amount of water, therefore it is important to plow when the land is neither too wet nor too dry. Land should be harrowed after plowing before the clods become hard and difficult to crush, and the surface made as fine as possible. Frequent harrowing of lands already planted will check the loss of water. Orchards, especially those containing young trees, will be greatly benefited by harrowing at brief intervals until mid-summer. The disk harrow is best adapted to clayey soils. The disks should be set at such an angle that the entire surface will be tilled. As a saver of soil moisture, however, the disk harrow is considered inferior to the Acme or spring tooth harrows. If the land has been put in proper condition early in the season a spike tooth or smoothing harrow will be all that is needed during the summer.

The frequent cultivation of hoed crops is necessary to prevent the rapid evaporation of moisture. If the ground is sufficiently loose an implement with many small teeth should be used, as such a cultivator gives a finer soil mulch than one with large teeth. A soil mulch 3 in deep is more effective in saving moisture than one of less depth. The land should be tilled after every rain, whether the fall is heavy or light. The object of cultivation is to destroy weeds and to prevent the formation of a surface crust. This crust, if allowed to remain unbroken, favors the capillary movement of water to the surface of the ground, where the moisture evaporates. Use the cultivator several times between rains, if the intervals are long.

Rolling is an advantage in preventing the loss of moisture from soils not compact enough to hold much water. The compacting of such soils by repeated rolling decreases the amount of

water that passes through them and beyond the reach of roots. When the object of rolling is to save the soil moisture, a tooth harrow should be used if possible after rolling, so as to form a layer of loose soil on the surface; otherwise rolling will decrease the soil moisture. The roller should be used with caution on clayey lands. The purpose of using the roller after seeding during dry weather is to compact the soil, thus increasing the capillary action, which carries the necessary amount of moisture to the seeds to cause germination. The roller is sometimes used after the plants are up, which of course favors the rise of water to the young roots. The addition of humus to soils deficient in organic material will greatly increase their capacity for holding water. This may be supplied by using vegetable mold cover crops, rotations, green manures and stable manures, says a bulletin of the Tenn exper sta.

HARVESTING THE POTATO CROP

A fine example of what a determined Yankee farmer can do on a poor, rundown, abandoned farm, is that of our friend, Allen N. Hoxsie, of Washington Co, R. I. Mr Hoxsie, when quite young, was employed in a store, but because of poor health had to take up outdoor exercise. He studied the poultry industry, embarked in it and was making a conspicuous success when ill health laid him off and the business had to be disposed of. This was in 1894, and various bits of his poultry experiences were printed in F & H at that time.

Regaining health, Mr Hoxsie went at it again. The half-tone illustration above shows a potato harvest on his farm last year. He worked two abandoned farms some little distance from his home place, situated in a town rated as in one of the poorest farming sections of the state. Brother Hoxsie has been in close touch with the experimenter station and applied its teachings practically instead of following in old ruts, as so many seem bound to do. He reports his operations as follows:

My force consisted of eight horses and three men up to harvest time, when it was increased to 10 horses and eight to 10 men. Raised 25 a potatoes, 20 a turnips and 10 a of general farm stuff, melons, a liberal home garden, sweet corn and millet. Outside team and machine work brought in \$200.

The ground for potatoes was plowed in the fall 9 in deep, using roller and jointer so as to get the sod all under. The farm had not been tilled for years. In spring it was disked, harrowed with a spring tooth, furrowed and fertilized with a broadcaster set for drill work at the rate of 1500 lbs p a. This year, 2000 lbs p a was used. Planting was by machine, but not until the soil was thoroughly ready for the seed. Just as the plants begin to crack the soil, we harrow each way with a steelpeg-tooth, level-till, smoothing harrow, which leaves the soil in perfect shape and all weeds killed—positively all. In a week they were cultivated close and deep with a Planet Jr cultivator. In another week the same cultivator was again put through with wings spread, but kept well to the middle of rows so as not to cut the roots. In another week they were horse-hoed with a Prout's hoeing machine, hilling up

some, always enough to cover any small weeds between and in the hills.

"By this time the vines were very large, having never stopped rapid growth, and we drilled in yellow stover corn with planters for fodder. No more cultivation could be done, for they very soon covered the ground. They were planted 17 in apart in the rows and 3 1/2 ft between rows. Bugs were kept under by a dry powder blow-gun. Corn was cut and bound by a harvester. The potato crop was dug by a digger as illustrated above, gathered in bags by men and teams, and run through a sorter into a pit for storage, to be sold at leisure."

Better Farming is necessary to-day than in times past to make the same amount of money. Amalgamation and how to get better prices for farm produce has been copiously dealt with by others, but how to get more produce for the same amount of labor and expense is a question that is engrossing the minds of farmers more than anything else. If a man does not go by someone else's experience he must find out for himself by actual experiment what he wants to know, and time is too limited, even life is too short to allow a farmer to find out in this way the best methods, species, varieties and plans for himself. Therefore he must of necessity, by some means or other, have the experience and advice of other successful men placed as an open book before him, in order that he may utilize their methods and avoid their failures. The best, surest and most practical way is to use some good agricultural paper as a means of conveyance. It is the surest and best because a farmer would not know the names and addresses of many farmers outside his own locality, if he wished to write, and through the paper the knowledge would be made known to a wide circle of readers. Then my opinion is that if farmers would be liberal with their experience and advice through F & H, and if the readers applied what they learned with economy and perseverance, a long-felt want would be supplied.—[L. C. Lanning, Elgin Co, Ont.]

The Most Successful Farmer in my vicinity is not a very hard working man, but he looks after his business and is very successful in all he undertakes. He is a lover of good hogs of which he has both Chester White and Poland-China registered stock. He raises a large number of pigs each year. He attends the fairs with cattle and hogs and generally takes first premiums. His dairy is a large one and he goes to the creamery all the year round. The dairy is divided so cows calve in Sept and April. He sells fresh cows in fall and spring and last fall sold 10 for \$300, a good price here. Meal and corn fodder are fed. He buys cows cheap and sells high. Two sons and a hired man also work on the farm. A large sugar bush also provides a nice annual revenue, its product being sold to large houses rather than to middlemen.—[E. C. Clifford, Stanstead Co, Que.]

Buggy Wheels of all sizes and grades, with steel or rubber tires on and with axles welded and set are described in a catalog issued by the manufacturer, W. H. Boob of Center Hall, Pa, which will be sent free to any reader who mentions F & H. This firm also manufactures rubber tire buggies, buggy tops and a special grade of wheels for repair work.

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It is the intention of the publishers of Farm and Home to admit into their columns none but reliable advertisers, and we believe that all the advertisements in this paper are from such parties. If subscribers find any of them to be otherwise, we will esteem it a favor if they will advise us, and we will at any time give our personal attention to any complaints which we receive. Always mention this paper when answering advertisements, as advertisers often advertise different things in several papers.

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