

Maintenance of Drains.

Editor "The Farmer's Advocate":

I have noticed a communication in your issue of Jan. 19th from a Mr. Way, referring to repairs of public drains. Mr. Way intimated that a change to his plan would result in fewer dissatisfied ratepayers. In the first place, there is no law, and, I think, no disposition, to prevent Mr. Way from doing all the repair work on drains that he might feel inclined to do. Neither do I think that there is a municipal council in Ontario that would object to Mr. Way and the owners of adjoining lands undertaking and carrying out any improvements, not detrimental to the interests of other land-owners, that they may feel disposed to make on a drain in which they may be interested; but when an argument is set up that a system that might work out right in a few cases of small drains, could with advantage be enacted for the government of all cases, we feel inclined to say, "Shoulder your shovels until other features of the case are talked over." Would Mr. Way, with, say, 25 acres of land, and 100 rods of ditch, undertake to maintain such portion of ditch, when he was fully conscious that the owners of hundred of acres of land were using every means of getting the water off their own lands, regardless of where it might go. We think not. Again, we can point to drains that carry the water from lands owned by two and three hundred land-owners, all of whom are using every means within their reach of getting rid of surplus water, and with the water there is always more or less solid matter that will and does settle somewhere. It is one thing to discuss the possibilities in the case of a small drain, having a fall of from 10 to 20 feet per mile, but quite another matter to work out a practical scheme to govern a drain having only one-inch fall per 100 feet, and receiving the water from 5,000 to 12,000 acres of land, through a countless number of drains that have been constructed to relieve the higher lands. No basis but such a one as will hold every land-owner responsible for his own acts, can be laid down. We have in Sec. 82 of the Municipal Drainage Act of 1910 a provision by which it shall be lawful for the council of any municipality to pass a by-law providing that it shall be the duty of the owner of every lot or part of lot assessed for benefit to clean out the drain and keep the same free from obstructions which may hinder or impede the free flow of water, and to remove therefrom all weeds and brushwood, and to keep the banks of the drain in order for the distance determined by the engineer in his report, etc. Our laws in the matter of maintenance are right, and the provision quoted is well enough, but can only in certain cases be applied. Our Legislature has wisely legislated as it has, confining the jurisdiction of a municipal by-law to cleaning out and removing weeds and brushwood. Experience has demonstrated, and will continue to demonstrate, the futility of such a system of maintaining municipal drains as Mr. Way suggests, except on a very limited scale. The reason of failure is easy to see: there must be one, and only one, directing head; the inclination of a dozen men, or perhaps fifty, can't be listened to; the diversity of opinion on the meaning of keeping in repair, or even cleaning out, is such that no system could or would be followed, or uniformity secured; and, last, but not least, would be an endless amount of litigation, which would be fruitless to all except lawyers. To select an isolated and unusual case of a small drain, and attempt to frame legislation for the Province from observations made, would be most absurd.

Can we not fairly ask ourselves, why should a land-owner be required to either construct or maintain three-fourths of a mile of drain having a ten-foot bottom, when a twelve-inch tile would carry all the water that would fall upon his own farm, or why should a land-owner be required to assume any portion of the maintenance of a drain across his own land, while such drain is an artificial and acknowledged outlet for the water from thousands of acres of land? Or why, coming back to Mr. Way's idea, should two or three hundred of land-owners be summoned annually to shoulder their shovel and travel many miles to put their portion of drain in order?

When land-owners, by their own act, and for their own benefit, cause water to flow upon the lands of others, they assume, and justly so, the responsibility, and should be required, and are justly required, to bear their share of the cost of carrying off the water they are sending down upon the lower lands, whether the distance be great or small, or whether the water be an original or repair work.

An equitable distribution of the responsibilities of land-owners is the only system that can be adopted, as the time has long since passed for the application of a statute-labor system in the maintenance of municipal drains, and we are of the opinion that, if Mr. Way had to get knee-deep in mud and water, and shovel his way through water, mud, grass and water-weeds, he would have less faith in the virtues of his system than he now appears to have.

Elgin Co., Ont.

FRITZ.

Screenings from Western Grains.

G. H. Clark, Dominion Seed Commissioner, set forth very clearly at the Experimental Union, at Guelph, the great danger of weeds which farmers incur by feeding the screenings of Western grains. There is scarcely a feed store in Ontario but has for years been handling more or less of these screenings. The result is in evidence everywhere. Do farmers generally realize the endless trouble they are almost certainly inviting by feeding this dirt?

Donald Sutherland, Director of Colonization, Toronto, advises us that, in a half pint of screenings from Western Canada oats being sold for feed in Northern Ontario, there were varying quantities of 26 different weed seeds, most of which are noxious, and many of them the worst of all weed pests, and most difficult of eradication, as perennial sow thistle, bindweed, wild mustard, and others as bad. It is not a question of cheap feed, but a question of clean farms, that we must keep uppermost at all times, and, to attain and retain this end, these screenings had better be burned or exported (the latter of which is scarcely a Christian act).

P. E. Island Seed Oats for Quebec.

A shipment of 1,000 bushels of pedigree Banner oats went forward from Prince Edward Island to Quebec early in January. The grain is from growers who are members of the Canadian Seed-growers' Association, and has been ordered through the Seed Branch, Ottawa, and will be sold by auction at a seed fair, to be held in Quebec City, to give farmers a chance to procure a pure article for seed, true to kind, and free from noxious weed seeds.

There is no Province in Canada so well suited for the production of the best quality of seed oats as P. E. Island, as it is practically free from wild oats, which has proved such a plague in other parts of the Dominion. Shipments made from here a few years ago to the Northwest graded much higher than seed oats from any other part of Canada or Scotland.

P. E. Island. WALTER SIMPSON.

THE DAIRY.

Overlapping of Cow-testing.

Editor "The Farmer's Advocate":

There is a waste of good money in our official testing of cows, especially in regard to testing Holsteins. There are two staffs of official testers, and it frequently happens that one official is leaving and another comes on, and sometimes they are both there together. This thing could be arranged much better.

There are the official seven-day and thirty-day tests. These tests have come in for criticism of late, but surely breeders are the best judges of the value of tests, and I find in the last report to hand there were 165 cows tested for seven days, and only 75 tested for one year. In the United States, the seven-day tests have grown so popular that there were over 1,300 cows tested; there are a number tested for one year, but the number is comparatively small.

No test that is not too costly can be devised that will be without fault. The short tests are objected to as being too short; they are correct, without a doubt, as far as they go, but they don't go far enough. The yearly tests go far enough, but cannot be absolutely relied upon for correctness. Cows vary from day to day in the amount of milk they give, so that an inspector visiting the herd would not be much check if there were any padding going on. Cows vary so in the amount given from day to day that one, two or even three or more pounds of milk could be padded daily. That would mean 300, 700 or 1,000 pounds could be padded in without detection, if the man was dishonest; everyone knows this who does any testing. Though one may be sure he is straight, he is apt to feel doubtful of the other fellow's tests; and these tests, for that reason, do not have the same weight with breeders as the shorter tests, that are known to be correct, every pound of milk having been weighed and tested by a supervisor, whilst the yearly test has only been supervised for sixteen days at intervals during the 365 days; that is, eight tests of two days each.

Then, as regards the tests for butter-fat, here, again, cows vary so much in fat, as well as milk, that it is recognized two days are not enough to get a fair average. It was for this reason the public tests were lengthened to three days, and even that has been proved not to be long enough. It takes full seven days to get a fair line on a cow's per cent. of butter fat. And we might just mention here that short tests have a value, too; the public tests are considered a great honor to win. One objection to the seven-day test is that some breeders dry their cows up, and get them

extra fat for it. There is not so much of this done, as milk is valuable. Every cow should be dry two months or longer for the sake of the calf. As a matter of fact, some of the largest seven-day tests have been made from cows only a short time dry. A cow may test higher soon after freshening, but she does not give the quantity of milk, and it is quantity, plus quality, or total pounds of fat made, that counts. But the yearly tests are not free from the same thing, and I know cows that have made records for the Canadian Record of Performance, with all the restrictions, that have been dry seven months previous to commencing the test. The rules say a cow must have had a calf fifteen months previous, but they didn't say anything as to how long she may be dry. The rule that a cow must be in calf, and due fifteen months, at latest, knocks out a large number of the cows, and it is through no fault of the owner of the cow. The cow is not only out for that year, but for the year following, and that likely means for all time. So that a breeder depending upon the yearly Record of Performance test would likely have a number of good cows for which he would have no official test.

As a matter of fact, all tests have value. A private test is as good as the man that made it, and these semi-official tests have just about the same value. The short seven-day or thirty-day tests are correct, absolutely, so far as they go; and when cows are making 100 pounds milk a day, or 30 pounds butter a week, we want more behind them than the owner's say-so. We want these official tests kept up, and we want the semi-official yearly tests, also. Not to make this article too long, I will have to cut out several things that are known to men who do testing. I think the Holstein breeders, at their annual meeting, should discuss this, and appoint a committee to get such a change made as to save overlapping. There is no reason why the tester looking after the yearly test should not make a seven-day test according to the present rules for such. This would go on record, and be so much to show for the cow; and, if a yearly record were then made, also, so much the better. I think it would be better to make three or four seven-day tests during the year, instead of eight two-day inspections that give a better average for butter-fat. Two days is too short; it may give a result too high or too low. It would not cost much more to carry out this suggestion, as the tester would be testing milk, instead of travelling around the country. Three or four visits, instead of eight, means less travelling, and less expense. The owner of the cow should pay something for this seven-day test. That the owners of cows are paying all the expense of the seven-day tests, shows that they value them. Would the owner of cows pay all the expense of the yearly tests if the Department should refuse to continue to pay for them? I don't think they would. It would be quite a saving to the owners or the Department to have the work united, and would, I am sure, result in more cows being tested for both seven days and for the year. GEO. RICE.

How a Sweepstakes Herd was Fed.

Editor "The Farmer's Advocate":

In reply to your letter asking for a statement of the feeding and general care of the herd which won the sweepstakes medal of the cheese-factory patrons' contest in the Western Ontario dairy-herd competition, I will give the facts of the past year, commencing in the fall of 1909.

When I stop sending to the factory, generally about the middle of November, the cows are fed cornstalks (which are husked by hand), morning and night. After the morning feed in the stable, they are turned out in the yard, where they have free access to water and straw. They are put in at four o'clock, being given about a pint of oat chop then, and again in the morning.

In the spring, about the middle of March, they are fed a few mangels and a little flaxseed meal, which lasts until good clover pasture comes. When they freshen, generally before the first of May, I feed about three pounds clear oat chop a cow per day.

I do not have a silo, nor do I intend to have one. I have not grown alfalfa, but intend to try it in a small way soon. The only soiling crop is two or three acres of sweet corn, which is fed when the pasture gets short.

I used a pure-bred Holstein sire for two years, five and six years ago; raised all the heifer calves, which, with the exception of one, form the present herd. I have used a pure-bred sire this past year, and intend to do so in future. I do not keep individual records, but get the weight from the factory every morning. I do not test for fat. Myself and two sons do all the work on the farm.

I cannot give the cost of feeding and caring for the herd, therefore cannot give the returns and profits, as, before the factory starts, and after I stop sending, we make butter, and no account is kept of that, or the labor, or the amount of feed. JOHN VAN SLYKE.

Elgin Co., Ont.