

AGRICULTURAL.

[FOR THE BEE.]

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS ON THE STATE OF
AGRICULTURE IN NOVA SCOTIA, AND THE
MEANS OF ITS IMPROVEMENT.

No. 14.

HAY-MAKING AND HARVESTING.

MR. DAWSON,

SIR,—As the winters are so long and severe in this country, it is worthy the Farmer's strictest attention to provide a sufficient quantity of good hay for the supply of his live stock: it seems to be more an object with a good man to have a great quantity, than to have it of superior quality; whatever the quantity may be the quality ought to be particularly attended to; there is more nourishment in one ton of very good hay than in two of indifferent. Clover, if cut when the first of the blossoms are fairly blown, and made in such a way as to retain the greatest quantity of the native juices, is excellent hay, whereas if it is let stand until the flowers are decayed, cattle will scarcely eat it at all, and it yields but very little nourishment. Timothy ought likewise to be cut early; the best time is a few days after the blossom falls, but as it is impossible to take about it all just when it is in the fittest state, every one must determine from his circumstances what is the most profitable method of proceeding, always keeping in view that it is better to lose a little by beginning before it is altogether ready than to run the risk of losing a greater quantity by decay. Care should be taken to have it as little exposed to rain, or even dew, as possible. When it is dry settled weather it is a good plan to spread out what is cut in the morning immediately after the scythe, and put it up in small cocks before the dew begins to fall at night, laying them out next morning when the dew is off the stubble, and turning it over about one o'clock, it may then be carted in before night.

There are a great many vegetables that may be made into hay if cut in the proper state; thistles make good hay for horses, sorrel for sheep, &c.; and although I would not recommend the cultivation of these, yet when they do grow, it is well to make the best of them, more particularly in such a season as this, when hay offers to be but a scanty crop.

I have heard some speak of salting hay, I have not given it a trial, therefore can say nothing about it; but any of those who have, and approve of it, might do well to make it known through the press, stating the method of doing it to the most advantage.

There need not be much said about the mechanical part of hay-making,—if you have a good long sharp scythe, with a short handle, and make a long sweep and a swift, keeping the heel well down, the work will be soon and well done.

Harvesting.—As the greater part of the profits of the farmer's year's labour depends upon the ingathering of the crops in harvest, it concerns all to know the way in which it can be done to the most advantage. The great object ought to be to secure the greatest quantity possible of both grain and fodder at the least expense. As the grain crops generally ripen much about the same time, the way in which they can be harvested with the most expedition and to answer the best purpose, should be preferred.

Although the reaping of grain be an old practice, it will be acknowledged that it is a tedious and wearisome process. From twenty-five year's practice I can recommend the mowing of it: there are many advantages that attend it, there is fully as much grain and more straw, they are got better seasoned, and about double the work can be done with the

same hands—a man and a boy can mow, gather, tie, and stook, an acre a-day with all ease. The reason why so many lay it aside after giving it a trial is, because they do not get into the way of doing it well at first, therefore they pronounce it a bad job; whereas, exercising a little patience, and repeated trials, would bring them into the way of it, and they could go on easily: to drive away as if mowing hay, will not do, although it may be done speedily it must be done with care, the scythe has to get a fair swing, taking care not to raise the heel when the cut is out, and bringing the scythe out the same distance every sweep: if the grain stand fair, mow with the wind, but if it be laid in different directions, the lie of the grain must be followed. When the weather is dry and settled, if it be let lie in the swath a day after it is cut, it may then be gathered into sheaves, bound up, and carted to the barn, but in ordinary it is safer to gather after the scythe, bind and stook it, where it will season much sooner than if reaped. When carted off the field if there are many stalks on the ground, go over it with a rake, and you have all snug. I do not approve of letting grain of any kind stand before it is cut, until it is what is called dead ripe; the grain is nothing better, and the straw much worse than if cut a little sooner. Grain of every description ought to be well seasoned before it is housed, particularly oats, as they are apt to heat, which is a great injury to both grain and fodder.

Yours truly,

OLD RUSTICUS.

P. S. As the part of my proposed plan yet to execute does not come into operation until the evenings again get long, I think it better to defer it until then, as I find there is but little time now.

O. R.

CLOVER SEED.

Sowing Clover Seed.—The two great objects to be attended to, in raising clover seed with profit, are—First to secure the production of as large a crop to the acre as practicable—and secondly, to harvest the crop in such a manner, as to bring as large a portion of the seed into the barn and to leave as small a portion of it as possible in the field.

To attain the first object, that of procuring a large product, we have in our preceding numbers, in observations on the culture of clover, given the necessary directions, we will now only repeat, that the main things to be attended to are the following:—1. That the land be fertile. 2. That it be well prepared before sowing the seed, as heretofore directed. 3d. That a sufficient quantity of seed be sown to the acre. 4th. That it be evenly distributed over the ground. 5th. That whenever the land requires it, aid, gypsum or plaster be sown on the clover—and 6th. That it be not injured by injudicious or excessive grazing. If these particulars be well attended to, an acre of ordinary land will produce three bushels of seed in a common season, often more.

We now come to speak of the more difficult and laborious operation of safely and economically harvesting and securing it. This requires care and attention. The great objects to be aimed at are, to cut the seed at the period when there is the largest portion of ripe seed on the ground, in that stage of maturity which will admit of its being collected into the barn. It is, we believe, to the improvident and ruinous neglect of strict attention to these two latter objects, that most farmers may attribute their failure in making clover seed. We will lay before our readers the results of our own observations and experience, on these important points, hoping that those of our patrons, who may have discovered a better mode of effecting these objects, than the one

recommended, will yet communicate to us their practice in time to enable us to lay it before the public in our next number.

Time of Cutting.—As the clover seed, from the time the first heads ripen, until the close of the season, are daily arriving at maturity, the great desideratum is, to ascertain the precise period when there is on the ground the greatest portion of ripe seed, in a state which will admit of its being collected and brought into the barn. If the clover be cut before this period, there must evidently be a loss sustained, from the immaturity of too large a portion of the seed. If the cutting be deferred beyond this period an equal, and perhaps a greater loss will be sustained, from the impossibility of saving the seed first ripened, generally the best, on account of its being so easily shattered off. We would recommend, as the most eligible time for cutting, the period when about two thirds of the heads have become ripe and assumed a black color, many of the others at this time of a brown color, will ripen after cutting.

Mode of Cutting.—Where the clover has not lodged, and is high enough to admit of it, by far the most expeditious, and in every point of view the most eligible mode of cutting, is to cradle it as we do grain, only throwing it into double swarths, that is laying the clover cut from two lands in one swarth. If the grass be so short as to require it, a strip of linen may be fastened to the fingers of the cradle so as to prevent the heads falling through them.

Mode of Curing.—If this crop be not heavy and the weather good, the swarths may lie undisturbed for several days, until the hay be perfectly cured, it should then, in the morning or evening while sufficiently moist from the dew, to prevent its shattering off too easily, be gently raked into small bunches, such as can be conveniently raised with a fork and laid on the waggon. When not too damp, these bunches should be hauled to the barn, and either stowed in mows, or which is best threshed off, and either immediately cleaned, or else the heads stowed away in a room prepared for the purpose until winter, to be then threshed or trodden out. But should there be rain on them or should they be suffered to remain in the field any length of time after being raked up, these bunches must with a fork be gently turned bottom upwards, and laid in a new place, after every rain to which they may be exposed, and every two or three days that they may have lain in the field in fair weather.

This is necessary to prevent the seed from being injured by the heat and moisture to which they will have been exposed, from the sun, the rain, and the moisture of the earth. After being sufficiently cured, while dry, let the seed be gently laid on the waggon, and hauled to the barn, using every necessary precaution to ensure, that as little of it as possible be left to the field or scattered along the road.—*American paper.*

Thistles.—It is said that if thistles are cut after they are in full bloom an inch or two above the ground they will be more easily subdued than those cut at the same time with the hoe below the surface. In the former case, the remaining stub of the thistle gets full of water, which resting on the crown of the plant injures it so far as to occasion a few feeble shoots only to rise, whilst in the latter strong and luxuriant stems were produced.

Botts in Horses.—It is said that the stage drivers on the routes leading from Albany to the western parts of the State of New York, mix with the water given to their horses, a little wood ashes, to preserve them from botts.