

SEASONABLE HINTS FROM MEN WHO HAVE SUCCEEDED

ONCE more the hoeing, hay-making, and harvesting months are with us, and the rush of work is great. Unfortunately the supply of skilled farm labor is not as plentiful as crop production opportunities and requirements would lead us to employ. An organized effort is being made, however, in every town and city in Canada to send out to the farm every capable helper that persuasion, if not coercion, can induce to offer for the great task of keeping in shape and harvesting the extensive areas a most favorable spring has enabled us to put under crop.

Labor such as may be expected to come from our urban centres, while admittedly not as effective as that which devotes its whole time to agriculture, will, nevertheless, if properly handled, do the work of saving the crop we and our Allies so much need in this, the probably decisive, year of the great war, and a crop that, even though grown and harvested under more trying conditions and at much greater cost per unit than usual, will yet prove amongst the most profitable, if not the most profitable, ever grown in this country.

Trusting that the following hints and suggestions may prove timely and helpful to you, under present strenuous conditions, I remain, sincerely yours,

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Director,

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METHODS OF CURING HAY

HAY making, or the curing of the hay crop, is an important process in farm work. This year extra help will be required and the hay-field will be the parade ground where many of the "S.O.S." boys and other recruits for Canada's second line of defence will "fall in." Making hay has always been hard work. Improved methods cannot do away with some of the heavy features of the work, though modern machinery enables a man to save more hay during the short period that hay is at its best than when the scythe, hand rake, fork, and truck comprised his haymaking equipment.

The man in charge of hay making operations should have experience, plenty of common sense, and a knowledge of the fundamental principles of weather forecasting if he would conserve all the food value in the hay crop. All methods have to be adapted to the weather and the maturity of the crop. If the old adage was

followed, "Make hay while the sun shines," with the present supply of labor much of the crop would be injured by over-maturity.

Some curing methods suggested are:

(a) Mature timothy and other grasses may be cut in the morn-

ing before the second growth is started; on the other hand, however, there are grave objections to delaying cutting any length of time after the second growth begins to appear. If cutting is delayed too long, the second growth may be cut off by the mower, the result being that the second crop



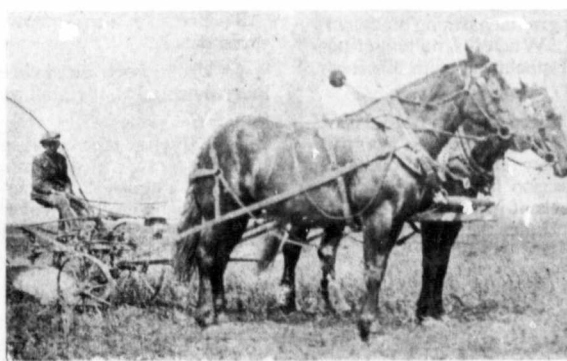
Furrow of A. M. Brownridge (sulky gang) at Portage Plowing Match.

ing of a bright day after the dew is off, tedded, raked in the afternoon, and loaded from the windrows. This hay is stored in a tight mow and salted saves in good shape for horses.

(b) Timothy and mixed hay, cut after the dew is off, at the best stage (when in bloom) should be turned, or tedded, raked in the afternoon, and built into large, carefully-made coils.

is reduced and delayed. Too late cutting is also likely to cause considerable shattering of leaves in the curing of the hay, resulting in a pronounced lessening of the quantity of the hay secured and a lowering of its feeding value.

It is generally advocated that alfalfa should be cut when "one-tenth in bloom" or a little earlier. The one-tenth in bloom rule applies fairly accurately, generally



"Eddie" Smith, 13 years old, at Portage Plowing Match. The youngest horse-plowman on the field.

Such hay will make rapidly in coil. Caps are used during threatening weather. Shake out coils to sun and wind, and haul in as soon as the hay rustles nicely. Store same as (a).

There is no advantage in cut-

ting before the second growth is started; on the other hand, however, there are grave objections to delaying cutting any length of time after the second growth begins to appear. If cutting is delayed too long, the second growth may be cut off by the mower, the result being that the second crop

safest guide as to time of cutting is therefore not the appearance of the blossoms, but the appearance of the new growth coming from the crown of the roots. **Alfalfa should be cut when the new growth is anywhere from half an inch to one inch long.**

Making the Alfalfa Hay.—Alfalfa hay may be cured either in the windrow or in coils.

There are some objections to windrow curing, the principal one being that losses are likely to be incurred through shattering of the leaves. On the other hand the windrow curing is preferred by many, as it involves less hand labor than curing in coils.

The best hay is obtained through curing in coils. Coil-cured alfalfa hay has generally a better color and aroma than hay cured in the windrow. It is also likely to become less dusty and to be of a greater feeding value, because there are fewer chances of losing the leaves through shattering. Coil curing can be recommended whenever labor is available. How soon after cutting the hay should be coiled, depends largely on weather conditions. In hot weather and bright sunshine, hay cut in the morning may be raked and coiled in the afternoon of the same day. If the weather is cloudy and somewhat cool, it may be fit to coil the day after it is cut. **It should be coiled when well wilted and before the leaves are so dry as to break off easily.** Most satisfactory curing is obtained when the coils are made comparatively small so that the air can circulate freely. If the weather is favorable, the hay may be cured to perfection in the coils, but often it may be advisable, three to four days after cutting, if the weather is warm and sunny, to shake the coils out in the morning and draw to the barn in the afternoon.

The hay may be considered cured when no moisture can be squeezed out of the stems.

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HANDLING HAY CROPS ON THE PRAIRIE

PRAIRIE farmers, generally speaking, depend largely on the native prairie hay and green sheaf oats as the main roughage for the winter feeding of live stock. The native hay is allowed to become quite ripe before cutting, which, in large measure, reduces the handling operations. On the other hand, however, where live stock are kept

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