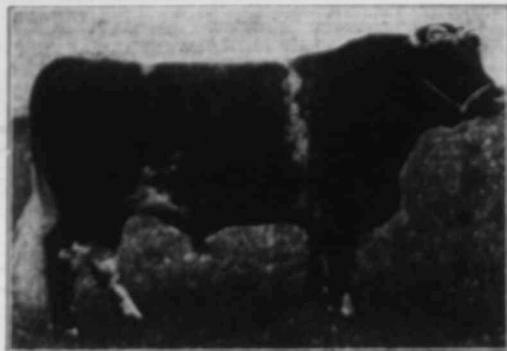


Farm Experiences

LIVESTOCK TO KILL WILD OATS

Wild oats are the worst weed in this district. Ten years ago they became troublesome here and in a few years every farm in the district became infested with them. Today the farmers are checking them, and I believe in time they will be completely eradicated. Fighting wild oats has transformed this district from an exclusive wheat country to a mixed farming country. In spite of several poor wheat crops and the weeds the farmers who keep stock are prospering. Mixed farming is a slow but a sure road to prosperity. The black rust and saw fly are doing a great deal of damage to our wheat this season, so the livestock will be the farmers' mainstay this year.

The rotation followed here on most farms is summer-fallow, wheat, oats or barley; then summer-fallow. Some farmers take two crops of wheat after fallowing. The farms are fenced and the fallows used for pasture. There is no known



Shorthorn bull "Broadway's Count 5th," 1st and champion Royal Agricultural Show, Manchester, Eng., 1916

method of completely killing wild oats in one season. Any method which is not followed for two successive years is bound to fail. Now the methods which have checked or killed wild oats are, first, pastured summer-fallow followed by a crop of green feed is one successful method; seeding down to grass for two or three years then breaking up seems successful, but has not been tested to any extent; growing corn for fodder in hills for two successive years on the same land will clean the dirtiest wild oat patch in existence if the corn is thoroughly cultivated. But of all these methods the first one is the easiest for the average farmer to follow.

The cleanest summer-fallows are those which are treated as follows: Shm plow the land in the fall, keep the livestock on the field the next season from early spring to freeze up, plow the land in June and follow the plow with the harrow. The stock will eat down at least two crops of wild oats. Now it is possible to obtain a clean crop of wheat on land treated as above, but if a second crop is grown on spring or fall plowing there is sure to be wild oats in it.

Wild oats have certain characteristics which make them very difficult to fight. They will not germinate unless there is the equivalent of June heat and moisture. The seeds will not germinate the same fall they ripen. All the wild oats will not germinate the same season, some will be in the land to germinate the second season. Wild oats will grow from the root if cut off with a cultivator or disc harrow before the third joint is formed.

Every known method of fighting wild oats has been tried out in this district, and we have tried most of them on our farm. First, I will deal with the barley method. "Cut the barley on the green side before the wild oats ripen," said the wise men. In practice the wild oats ripen just long enough before the barley to shed seed enough on the ground to infest the land for years to come. There may be a good crop of barley depending on the season, but there is always a splendid crop of wild oats. Don't depend on the barley root to clean your farm. Plowing the fallow twice was a failure with us, at least was not as successful as plowing once and pasturing, besides it caused the land to drift. In wet seasons you can certainly destroy the oats, but sooner or later your land will drift. Then we tried plowing the land in early spring, letting the wild oats start, then cultivating or discing them out and sowing oats or barley. This method was a failure because enough oats escaped the disc or cultivator to grow again, and we prepared a splendid seed bed for a second crop of wild oats which ripened with the sown crop. Wild oats, as noted before, grow from the root if cut off before the third joint is formed, and if you let them go until they reach that stage you might as well plow the land. There are other methods which we have seen tried out which are failures for the reasons given. First, the dry-farming Campbell method of fallowing, on black loam lands the soil will drift so that it is almost impossible to grow crops, and even on heavy

clay land this method will cause drifting. After a certain time in summer the wild oats will not germinate, so this excessive cultivation brings them to the surface and prepares a splendid seed bed for them to germinate with the wheat the next spring. The dirtiest farm for wild oats I ever saw was one where the owner always disc his summer-fallow at least five times. As he was faced with ruin he quit that plan. Discing fallowed land after August 1 or discing it before sowing the wheat in the spring encourages the growth of wild oats. They are worked to the surface and germinate with the wheat. Do not use any implement but the drag harrow ahead of the seeder.

Disc your stubble land by all means in the fall, but keep the disc harrow off the summer-fallow if wild oats is your only troublesome weed. Growing fall rye is said to be an excellent method of fighting wild oats, and from my knowledge of these pests I believe it is. The above is the result of twelve years' close study and hard fighting against these pests. They cost us thousands of dollars loss and we made no headway against them until we used livestock to aid us. We are not clear of them yet, but we have cleaned part of the farm completely and will soon have the rest of it so. We have no wild oats on fields that a few years ago grew nothing but wild oats.—"HAYSEED," Pipestone, Minn.

WEANING YOUR LAMBS

At the present time when sheep are such valuable property the proper looking after them seems to me to demand greater attention than many men give to it. I have usually found my sheep paid me better profits than almost any other class of stock on the farm. Of course we did not receive as big a price for our wool this year as we expected in view of the phenomenal possibilities that we were led to expect from the expert letters in some of the Winnipeg papers. We have, however, made a good profit, and greater care with our flocks would be well warranted.

There appears to be too many men with the idea that lambs should wean themselves. I usually wean the lambs when they have sucked four to five months and take the lambs away at due separation. If this is not done both only fret much longer than they otherwise would. The reason, of course, for the course most people seem to follow is that the ewe's udder fills up and there is a serious danger of caked udders. The milk that collects in the udder while the ewe is worrying about her lamb is abnormal and tends to only do the lamb harm at a time when it is already too much disturbed. I believe in separating them once and keeping them separated.

Men who take care with the ewes after weaning will not have a great deal of difficulty with caked udders. There is just as great difference in the



Milking a ewe with two hands to hasten the work. From F. Klein Holms

milking qualities of ewes as of dairy cows, and many ewes should be given just as much attention when the lambs are being weaned as if a good cow were being dried off. The ewes should be put on short dry pasture for a time, and the first or not more than the second day after weaning they should be collected and milked out. This can be done with

two hands and speeds up the work greatly. She should only be milked enough to soften the udder. Another milking a couple of days later will usually do most ewes, tho there will still be some that should be watched and may need milking in three or four days more. The heaviest milking ewes can be kept track of by marking with paint or chalk. I have followed this practice for some years and have never had one udder go bad.

When I take the lambs off I try to turn them on some fresh pasture. Last year I had a piece of rape that made great feed for them. This year I have some alfalfa from which the second crop has been cut and the young growth of which should make dandy feed for them.

Parasites

I have had more or less difficulty, however, with stomach and tape worms, and I have found frequent changes of pasture very valuable for this. The



Hereford bull "Dentry," 1st and champion at the Royal Agricultural Society Show, Manchester, Eng., 1916

warm summer months help the spread of these parasites very much. Fields where there have been no sheep for a year or more and which have been plowed and cultivated since sheep grazed on them are pretty well free from infection. The old sloughs are a likely source of parasite infection. Stagnant water is no more fit for sheep than for other kinds of stock. Fresh, clean water and plenty of it is most important.

One of the commonest causes of poor lamb crops is found, I have observed, in the lack of getting ewes into proper condition before breeding them. This getting of ewes back into condition is what some call "flushing" them. The condition of the ewes is even more important than that of the ram. I have seen ewes bred in a run-down condition after raising two lambs, and they either did not get in lamb or dragged along in poor condition for a long time and finally raised a poor pair of lambs the next year. Ewes in good condition and a vigorous ram give a higher percentage of twin lambs. The last two years I have turned the ewes, after drying them up well, onto rape and they did splendidly. They picked up quickly. I have not always had this feed available and at such times have fed one-half to one pound per day of two parts oats and one part bran for two weeks previous to turning the ram with them. A little care in handling a flock of sheep will return big dividends.—F. J. L., Sask.

CHANGING ALKALI PATCHES

Many farms have more or less alkali, generally located in small patches or low stretches of land. If at all bad, wheat, oats and barley never give a profitable crop under alkaline conditions. The recognized methods of improving this soil or removing the alkali, such as by irrigation, scraping the soil or the addition of land plaster, are generally impracticable. These spots are unsightly, bad to plow and return little, yet there are several ways they can be made profitable.

I had two very bad plots that are now giving good pasture of brome grass. I manured them about six inches thick with coarse horse manure and fallowed the land. It took all summer to get the manure well worked into the soil. The next spring I sowed fifteen pounds of brome per acre in May without a nurse crop and top dressed with manure again to check evaporation. I got a good stand, and an acre of this is as good as five of prairie. This method is best when the land can be pastured conveniently. If objection is made to brome, the same manure treatment and seeding with western rye grass will turn these patches into profitable hay meadows, but it is of little use as a pasture grass.

If alkali patches are well manured a good crop of flax is practically sure, and a few acres of this crop is a good investment on every farm if only grown for feed for calves, dairy or fattening of

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