

A Bumper Hay Crop, and How to Handle It.

In at least some sections of the country haying is upon us, and, as the crop is heavy, it is specially important that it be cured with all the despatch consistent with the making of a prime article of fodder. It is important, however, that quality be kept in mind as the paramount consideration, for the economy of making poor hay, to be supplemented in feeding with expensive concentrates, is never, to our mind, apparent.

While great improvement in haying methods has taken place, as regards expedition, at any rate, there is room for much more, and just now is an opportune moment to compare notes. To this end, we have arranged to place before our readers a budget of contributions from a list of practical correspondents instructed to deal with the following points:

1. How do acreage and promise of meadows in your locality compare with 1907 and previous years?
2. At what stage do you aim to commence cutting, and why?
3. Describe your favorite or customary practice in mowing, tedding or turning, raking, coiling, loading, unloading, and mowing or stacking, with special reference to labor-saving implements, particularly unloading devices.
4. Have you ever used hay caps or seen them used, and with what success?
5. What do you consider the most important controllable factor in the making of good hay?
6. What would you consider the average cost per ton of making and storing clover, timothy and alfalfa hay, respectively?

* * *

WIDE-SWATH IMPLEMENTS, BUT NOT THE LOADER.

In replying to your favor of May 30th, in reference to the prospects of the hay crop in this section, and our methods of curing and storing hay, allow me to express my appreciation of your efforts to give us useful information regarding the different problems that confront us as farmers.

The meadows, at time of writing, give promise of returning a bumper crop. Those on loamy soils are particularly heavy. On the heavy clay soils, especially those not well underdrained, the clover was badly heaved in the spring. It was necessary to plow several pieces and sow them with millet. The acreage is about the same as in previous years. Alfalfa is not grown very extensively in this section for hay. It is, however, becoming more popular, and several farmers sowed from one to three acres this year. What is grown at present is used mostly as a soiling crop, for which purpose it is unexcelled. We have cured some of it for hay in previous years, and considered that we never had hay more valuable.

We aim to cut clover when it is in full bloom, and a few of the earliest heads are turning brown. If cut too green, it is so sappy that it cannot be cured readily, while if left until a third of it is turning brown, the hay will be somewhat woody, and not nearly so palatable nor digestible. When curing alfalfa for hay, we cut it when half of it is in bloom; if left until it is in full bloom, we find that it will be woody and that a large number of the leaves will fall off when it is being tedded. We aim to cut timothy immediately after the second "blow" has fallen. We consider that what is gained in quantity after this stage is more than lost in quality. Our experience indicates that good oat straw is better feed than over-matured timothy hay.

Curing and Storing.—We are still old-fashioned enough to believe in coiling, and have never used a hay loader, although we do not claim that they are not useful. We begin mowing as soon as the dew is off, and continue until noon. We use a six-foot-cut mower—it would be better if it were seven—with a tedder and rake to match, each of these two latter taking two swaths of the mower at a time. One hour after the mower we start the tedder. We consider the tedder indispensable in the making of good hay. The tedder is kept going until five o'clock, when we aim to commence raking and coiling, endeavoring to have all that was cut that day in coils before the dew becomes heavy. After being in the coils one day, although it would be better if left two, we commence hauling. Two men pitching from the coils, and one man building the load, can handle hay very quickly. We have used both the slings and a double-harpooned fork for unloading, but, except in very short hay, we prefer the fork. There is always a lot of time taken up placing the ropes for slings. When building for the fork, we aim to have the load come off in four hauls. Build the lower back bundle first, then the lower front one, then the upper back one, and finish your load with the upper front bundle. When unloading, take the bundles that you build last off first. In

handling hay in this way, it is necessary that each bundle be well torn apart in the mow and well tramped down. If left in the mow in large hay-fork bundles, it is almost sure to spoil some, and will not come out again with a nice green color.

Owing to the fact that alfalfa has to be cut so green, it is more difficult to cure than common

EARLY CUTTING AND RAPID CURING.

Acreage is fully up to average. Promise of crop was never better at this date. Common red clover and alfalfa or lucerne are excellent.

Commence cutting alfalfa when three parts of the bloom is out. If cut earlier, the loss in weight in the crop will be considerable, and will



Time-savers.

clover or timothy. In our experience, we found it necessary to leave it exposed to the sun for a day after it was cut, and we also turned out the coils an hour or so before hauling.

The most important controllable factor in the curing of good hay, we consider to be the prevention, in as far as possible, of the hay coming in

contact with extraneous moisture, as dew and rain. In full bloom, or slightly past, the stems become woody, and the loss of leaves in curing will be much greater. Common red is at its best when in full bloom, and when a few of the heads which first bloomed are beginning to turn brown. If the weather is showery, it is better to defer cutting a few days, as the injury from rain may be greater than the injury from over-maturity. Timothy should be cut when the bloom is off. If cut when in bloom, it becomes dusty, and is harder to cure. If left to get over-mature, it becomes woody, and much of the leaves and seed is lost. Stock will not relish it as well as if cut before the seed begins to ripen.

When prospects are for fine weather, begin mowing any time during the day. As soon as sufficient is cut, start the tedder. If two mowers are put in the field, start the tedder with them. The

tedder with them. The

tedder with them. The



Side-delivery Hay Rake.

weather is the controlling factor. If exceptionally fine, coil in the evening. If slow at curing, ted again next morning, and coil as soon as the hay is in fit condition to do so. Leave in coils two or three days, then open coils in three or four parts, so as to allow the air and wind to pass through before drawing to the barns.

contact with extraneous moisture, as dew and rain. The cost per ton of making and storing hay depends upon the conditions of the weather. During favorable conditions, I have figured the cost as follows: Red clover, \$1.30 per ton; timothy, \$1.20; alfalfa, \$1.50. B. J. WATERS. Middlesex Co., Ont.



Two to One.