

Seth's Potato Philosophy.

EDITOR "THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE":

Seth Whipperton says potatoes are like people in one sense. Their qualities follow largely by rule of families. Last year before planting time he read about the experiment of Professor Waid, of the Ohio Experimental Station. Prof. Waid compared results from good seed selected from the pile with those from seed selected from good hills. From each 100 lbs. produced from the former there were 125 lbs. produced from the latter. Last fall Seth followed the plow at harvest time, and selected his seed from the best hills. He is very much excited over the new way. "No more manure in the hill," said Seth the other evening. "Fertilizer that is all ready for the plants to use is all right, but it's bad to put dung in the hill. Last summer every row where I tried it suffered from the white grub. They made for the very best potatoes, too. And no end of appetite!"

Out in Greeley County, Colorado—the most famous potato region in America—from which over 12,000 carloads are shipped annually, the best practice in planting is to use whole tubers—a thin slice having been taken from the seed end. One of the most successful of the Greeley growers, by specializing in potato knowledge and practice has obtained as high as 834 bushels per acre.

Seth looked carefully into the question of the size of set now that ordinary potatoes—"no talk of seed"—have gone to over \$2.00 a bag. He finds from records of the South Dakota College of Agriculture that:

1. That the yield of potatoes from pieces of large seed potatoes was 28 per cent. higher than that from pieces of small seed potatoes.

2. The yield of potatoes from large seed pieces was 70 per cent. greater than that from small seed potatoes.

These results coincide with Seth's experience. But the question he has had to answer, now that potatoes are so dear, is how big to make the sets. An experiment station of the United States Department of Agriculture gives the following figures as a guide.

Average Differences Per Acre in Gross Salable Yields from Different Seed Pieces.

Excess from use of	Bu.	%
Two-eye pieces over one-eye pieces.....	23	21
Quarters over two-eye pieces.....	10	15
Halves over quarters.....	15	15
Wholes over halves.....	14	10

Seth has figured it out this way. If time is scarce, as seems likely, he will plant whole potatoes. If he can find time for cutting he will plant halves. When potatoes are cheap he always uses whole potatoes as seed.

The weakened condition of the plants last fall, Seth thinks, made them subject to more diseases than usual. The importation of potatoes from far off points, adds to the danger of disease, and makes Seth more careful.

In cutting his sets he is going to be more careful than usual to remove from the seed boxes all tubers that look "off the mark," and to have a number of knives and a bath of bichloride of mercury (of the strength of one to one thousand) on hand to prevent the transfer of diseases. Should he cut through a diseased potato he will put that knife into the bath, and use another taken from it.

Time during the harvest season in these parts will be so scarce a commodity that Seth is anxious to know where he can hire a pair of rose-breasted grosbeaks to adopt as his agents in destroying the potato beetle. A pair of the birds are reputed to be able to manage an acre of potatoes, and Seth is going to plant twenty rows across the field. In lieu of the grosbeaks, which have never been known to come voluntarily into these townships, Seth will resort to his sprayer and the good old Bordeaux mixture, mixed as follows: 4 lbs. lime, 4 lbs. bluestone, 12 oz. Paris green, 40 imperial gallons of water. Two applications of this will suffice for the potato beetle, but for fear of late blight Seth will endeavor to spray every fortnight until digging time.

If Seth had been as potato-wise last August, during the period of excessive

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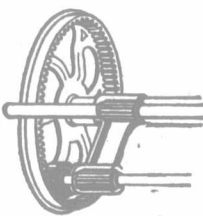
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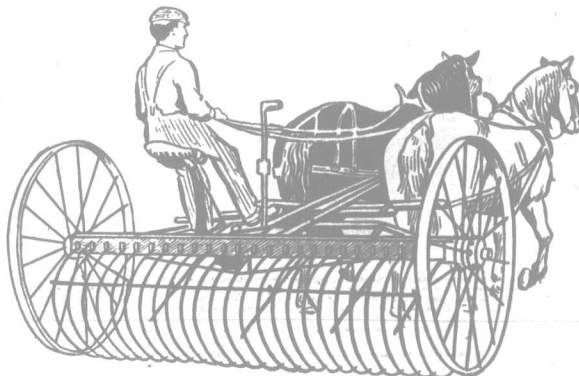
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