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Now the Summer-fallow.

Not in the annals of the agricultural history of the West has there been a season so favorable for seeding operations; in fact, it would seem impossible to have seed go into the ground under more favorable conditions. The rains of last autumn left the cultivated land well moistened when the winter set in, and although there was little snow during the winter, still, the fine surface soil mulch created by the mellowing influence of freezing and thawing has retained a good share of the soil moisture; while for horse and man and machine, the condition of the soil for spring work has been well-nigh perfect up to date of writing. No one should allow these unusually favorable circumstances to tempt him to crop land that should be summer-fallowed or seeded down to grass, simply because it is so much easier to put in a crop. Due consideration should be given to the harvesting, which is a much more serious matter than the seeding, present indications pointing toward a probable scarcity of labor throughout the rush season.

Moisture is unquestionably the most important element required for successful plant growth in this prairie country. With sufficient rainfall during the growing season, our crop is, generally speaking, assured. It is quite possible to have even an excessive rainfall during any one year, and yet if it does not come at the proper season, a crop failure may result. This, of course, would depend largely upon the ability of the soil to take up and retain moisture. Soils differ largely in this respect; but much depends, upon the cultivation given, and here is where a little "book farming" may come in useful.

Plants take a large portion of their food in a liquid form through their roots; the liquid thus taken from the soil passes up through the stems to the leaves, where it is digested; the water being mostly given off into the atmosphere, while the nutriment is retained to build up the plant tissue, flowers and fruit; thus every plant acts as a pump, drawing the moisture from the soil and giving it to the atmosphere. The difference in the amount of moisture in the soil of a well-worked summer-fallow and an adjoining grain field is an excellent illustration of this. It is the custom of some to allow weeds to make a good growth before plowing the summer-fallow, under the impression that the green crop thus turned under will be of manurial benefit to the soil, but as the benefit thus derived is exceedingly questionable, and an immense amount of moisture is pumped from the soil by the growing weeds, the loss is greater than the gain. The moisture that could be saved to the soil by early plowing would do more towards the succeeding crop, and at the same time, time would be gained in the germinating and destroying of more weed seeds while the growing season was still on.

Moisture will evaporate very rapidly from a bare fallow that is not protected by a well-worked soil mulch. Everybody knows this, but there are sometimes great difficulties in the way of providing the soil mulch, the greatest of which is the increased tendency of the finely-worked surface soil to drift. The fact that soils drift is evidence that they are lacking in root fiber or humus, which can most readily be supplied in this country by seeding down to grass. Each year the area sown to grass is increasing; this year the increase will be very greatly in excess of any previous year in the country's history, and it is well.

A very few years ago a common remark in the wheat sections was, "My land is too good for growing stock," but this did not prevent the wind from blowing it away, and to get it back into proper mechanical condition to prevent drifting and to conserve moisture, it must be put down to grass. Live stock will follow the grass in natural order, and then who can doubt but that the best wheat sections will also be the best stock sections, with a corresponding increase in prosperity and also in land values.

The Importation of Nursery Stock.

As announced in our last issue, the authorities at Ottawa have amended the San José Scale Act so as to permit the importation of nursery stock from the United States upon its being subjected to fumigation with hydrocyanic acid gas, under the supervision of a qualified official. A fumigating station has been established at Winnipeg, which is the port of entry for all Western Canada. It seems unfortunate that the amendment and preparations for treating the stock could not have been put through a little earlier, as we fear the concession will have been of little benefit this season. It was near the middle of April before the arrangements were made known, and about the 25th of the month before the fumigating station at Winnipeg was ready, while May 1st was the time limit for receiving the stock, as the treatment to which it is subjected kills the stock after it has budded out.

We understand it is intended to allow the importation of stock again in the fall, but it may be difficult to get stock from the south that is matured and dormant through in time to have it heeled in before winter's frost sets in, and in spring shipments there is always danger of a few warm days bursting the buds, when under the existing regulations a total loss would ensue. The following extract is from the order-in-council:

"As it is well known that well-matured and thoroughly dormant nursery stock may be safely treated, but that there is danger of serious injury to the trees if fumigated in the autumn before the buds are thoroughly dormant, or in the spring after the buds have begun to unfold, all stock which when received is immature or too far advanced for safe treatment will be refused entry and held at the risk of the shipper."

Would it not be possible, in view of the great importance to the West of being able to import from Minnesota, to have a competent Government official appointed to inspect for the scale all stock imported, and fumigate or destroy any affected stock. In this way, stock immature or too far advanced that was not affected with the scale would not be lost.

Care for the Foal.

The colts are now coming on the farms, and will continue to come for two months, and the profit in them will depend very largely on the welcome they get when coming into the world. We think the first duty of every farmer to his colt when he first sees it, after allowing it a draught of nature's fountain, is to catch it and hold it. Put the left arm around its neck and the right about its hips until it quits struggling. In this way you convey to the youngster the idea that man is omnipotent, a being not to be resisted. It henceforth regards man as its god, and if he will show it kindness as well as power, he will give it to understand that he does not mean to hurt it; it will in a colt's way worship him in the future and render him obedience.

The next thing is to see that its bowels are kept open and regular, and that it gets started in right. If it has not been well born, or, rather, well bred, it is the owner's fault and loss. The well-bred colt always receives more kindness and is happier than the misbegotten.

The next thing is to teach it to stay at home when its dam has business on the farm. This can be done by confining it where it can not get out or hurt itself, and all the better if in company with another colt or horse; and as soon as it is able to nibble at grain, it should have some clean oats or bran with which to stay the gnawings of hunger. In its earlier weeks it should have nourishment between meals if the mare is at work in the field, and as soon as it is able to eat it should have a side table whether the mare is at work or not.

The first summer and winter lay the foundation of the frame and determine largely the future usefulness of the horse, and one of the main things is for it to have plenty of good feed. The proper development of the plan of the breeder cannot otherwise be secured. *Wallace Farmer.*

Alfalfa That May Suit Manitoba.

Prof. Hausen, of South Dakota Experiment Station, visited northern Russia a few years ago at the instigation of the Secretary of the United States Department of Agriculture, with instructions to look for some leguminous fodder plant that would likely be suitable for the droughty districts of the Western States. Below we reproduce a portion of Prof. Hausen's report of his finding Turkestan alfalfa and its success so far in America.

"At the Experiment Station at Brookings, S. D., with a minimum temperature last winter of 40 degrees below zero with the ground bare, common alfalfa was killed, while this alfalfa from the heart of Asia came through unharmed. One of the main instructions of Secretary Wilson in sending the writer on this trip in '97-'98, of nearly ten months, was to secure, if possible, a hardy, drought-resisting leguminous forage plant from the elevated table-lands of Asia. Upon reaching Russia, the Government agricultural authorities at Moscow and St. Petersburg told me of this plant. It is distinct from common alfalfa, which has come to us largely from Spain. Botanically, the difference is expressed by Russian authorities in naming Turkestan alfalfa *Medicago Sativa Turkestanica*, while common alfalfa is called *Medicago Sativa*. I learned, especially from Prince Massalski, of the Department of Agriculture at St. Petersburg, that it had been found in parallel experiments east of the Caspian Sea in the Merv oases in Russian Turkestan that the native alfalfa was vastly superior to the common alfalfa, especially where there was a lack of water, as it was able to give satisfactory crops with a minimum supply of water so small that the European (common) alfalfa perished from drought.

"Along the Volga River at the dry-region experiment stations of eastern European Russia I found this plant doing well, and when I got to the desert and semi-desert regions of Turcomania, Bokhara, and the Semiretchnisk province of Russian Turkestan, all east of the Caspian Sea, I made careful study of the plant. Here were camels by the thousands, and clouds of dust often so thick that a wet sponge was found essential for relative comfort in breathing. I was so pleased with what was seen of this plant that I did not stop until fully 18,000 pounds of the seed was secured, chiefly from the cotton-growing sections among the Sarts, or native Mohammedans. The main reason for making the overland journey of over 2,000 miles (1,300 by wagon, 700 by sleigh) from Tashkent, the capital of Russian Turkestan, to Omsk, in Siberia, via Kuldja, in western China, was to trace this plant to its northern limits, which was found to be near Kopal, in Siberia (lat. 45 degrees 10 minutes, long. 79 degrees east of Greenwich). Kuldja, in Sargaria, western China, is in lat. 43 degrees 50 minutes, long. 81 degrees 20 minutes east, and was the farthest point reached in my journey (about half way around the globe). Seed was secured from eight different sources, but, of course, only small lots could be obtained from the places visited in the overland journey. The interesting, and to me the most surprising, fact is that the alfalfa which proved so hardy at Brookings was from the cotton section of Turkestan, so that the plant stands cold as well as drought. This indicates that in this plant we have an alfalfa that will be hardy to our northern borders and probably north into Canada."

Moose Jaw Spring Show.

Spring Stallion Show was held on April 17th by the Moose Jaw Agricultural Society. The attendance was good, but the entries not numerous. Prizewinners were: Heavy draught stallion—(1) G. M. Annable's "Atlas," (2) Alex. Thompson's "Young Ringleader." General purpose stallion—(1) G. M. Annable's "Lord Roberts," (2) G. M. Annable's "Roving Prince." Thoroughbred stallion—(1) R. S. Fulton's "Rumpus." Roaster—Battle Bros. "Fleetmont." Shorthorn bull (yearling)—F. W. Green's "Strathallen Pioneer," 1st, and "Duke of Boharm," 2nd. Shorthorn bull (aged)—F. W. Green's "Strathallen Hero," 1st, and "Pioneer of Gloster," 2nd.

Russell Stallion Show.

A Spring Stallion Show was held at Russell on April 20th. There were six entries in the heavy draft class, first and second prizes being awarded to the first two on the list in the order mentioned: Ireland's Prince, owned by the Syndicate; Poteath, owned by Alex. Forsyth; Aberdeen, owned by Bennie Bros.; What's Wanted, owned by H. McDonald; General Marcia, owned by D'Arcy Johnston.