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Controlling Yields

Continued from Page 7

Too Late Plowing of the Fallow. The longer the fallow is left unplowed the less moisture there will be conserved and the less available plant food developed. Under our tests here on clean land the yield decreased at the rate of one bushel per acre for each week's delay after the first of June. On very weedy soils it is generally advisable to get the weed seeds germinated before plowing the fallow.

Poor Soils. Soils may be "poor" from a variety of causes. Such poor soils as we have in this country are generally unproductive as a result of the low organic matter content. The latter can be built up only by one of the following methods: Applying barnyard manure; plowing under green crops; plowing under crop residues; using perennial grasses and legumes on at least a portion of the farm.

Weeds and Plant Diseases

Weeds. Time will not permit of more than a brief reference to this point. I shall only refer to the principles of weed control, the first of which is that annual weeds can be controlled by preventing them from seeding, the second that biennials can be controlled by plowing the land every year, and the third that perennials can be controlled by frequent plowing, preferably in the dry season of the year.

Plant Diseases. The common diseases affecting plants in Western Canada are, rust, smut, potato scab, and flax wilt, although many other diseases take an annual toll from the farmer's profit. Rust cannot be controlled but its ravages may be lessened by certain cultural practices. The other diseases mentioned, except the loose smuts of wheat and barley, can be either lessened or entirely prevented by the formalin treatment, while the loose smuts referred to can be controlled by the hot water treatment.

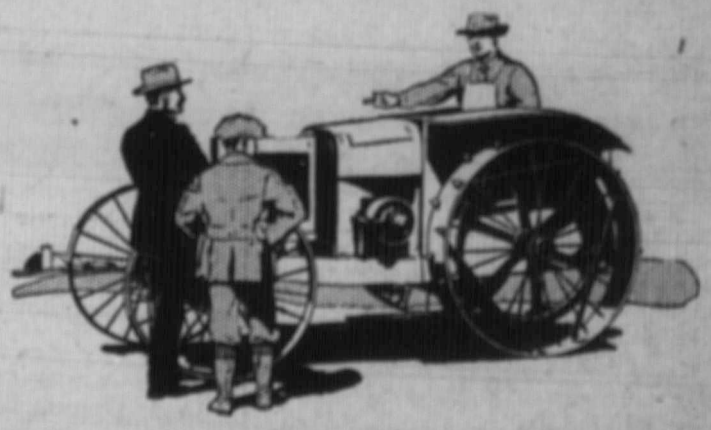
Hot Winds. The hot winds that occasionally occur in southwestern Saskatchewan increase very greatly both the evaporation of moisture from the soil and transpiration from the leaves of the crop. If the velocity of the wind could be economically lessened in any way, such as by using wind breaks, much damage could be prevented. In actual practice the only ways of lessening the amount of injury from this source are: To store as much moisture as possible in the soil; to use drought resistant or drought avoiding crops, i.e., corn, early varieties; to follow as thoroughly as possible the established practices of dry farming.

Drifting Soil—Frost

Drifting Soil. The loss due to soil drifting can be permanently remedied only by building up the organic matter content of the soil in ways that have already been mentioned. As temporary expedients in lessening the injury from soil drifting the following may be mentioned: The use of perennial crops; the use of biennials such as winter rye; the use of a thin pasture crop on the fallow; the practice of leaving the land in shallow ridges and using the harrows less frequently and the larger cultivators more.

Frost. Low temperature frequently works serious injury to all grain crops in Northern Saskatchewan and occasionally to the same crops in other parts of the province. Our growing season is short and as we cannot control the temperature of the atmosphere we can lessen the damage from frost only by putting in practice those things that result in earlier maturity of the crops sown. Among these practices the following 10 may be mentioned: Packing the land; thick seeding; using early classes of grain; using early varieties of grain; less frequent fallowing; shallower plowing for the fallow; later plowing of the fallow; pasturing the fallow; growing frost resistant crops; by going into mixed or stock farming.

The first eight of these practices aid us in avoiding frost, but where frost cannot be avoided the last two practices enable one to farm so that serious injury will not result from this cause.



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