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The Farmer's Advocate and Home Magazine

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EDITORIAL

It has been a real old-fashioned summer in many districts.

The ground may be hard, but don't neglect the after-harvest tillage.

Moving pictures are now to be one of the "home comforts" of Atlantic liners. What next?

The drier the weather the greater the importance of keeping the top soil stirred to retain moisture.

Plan a holiday or two and attend your nearest large exhibition, and at the same time do not forget the county fair.

A good many cows can put more water than is absolutely necessary in their milk themselves. No one need add any finishing touches to the job.

It is not good policy to depend upon dry weather alone to kill weeds, but it aids greatly when good cultivation is given. Right now an opportunity is afforded to get rid of a large number of these pests.

Reports come to hand almost every day telling of the ravages of apple scab this season. Packers will need to be doubly careful this fall, or Ontario apples will get another set-back. It never pays to wrongly label anything.

None are too old to learn. It is the man who watches closely, not only his own methods, but those of others as well, and profits by all the mistakes made that usually makes the great success. If your neighbor's crop was better than your own why not find out the reason? He will likely be glad to explain his cultivation.

Press reports often seem to indicate that our country is being overrun with weeds, and is being sadly neglected because of the scarcity of farm labor. True, labor is scarce, and not all farms are operated as they would be if men were more plentiful, but where are there to be found better crops, taking one year with another than right here in Ontario? While some farms, no doubt, would produce more if labor was more plentiful, the men who are farming to-day deserve a great deal of praise upon the excellence of the crop produced. There is, and always will be, room for improvement, and it behoves us all to do our best.

We recently heard of a man who refused to listen to any recognized agricultural authority, and would not read any agricultural papers, because he said that he already knew more than any college-trained agriculturist or writer for farm papers. It is a sad state of affairs when a man allows himself to believe that he has mastered all the difficulties of agricultural operations of all kinds. No man, no matter how extensive has been his practical experience, nor how many college parchments he holds, has yet mastered all the details of agriculture. Each day brings something new, and it is the man with open mind ready to receive new ideas and weigh them carefully who is most likely to make the greatest success of his calling.

Know Farming and the Farm Before Buying.

One of the most widely circulated United States weeklies, recently gave a little good advice to the city man who, with absolutely no practical experience, contemplates entering upon life as a farmer. It did not advise him to first enter an agricultural college and fill his mind with the theory of agricultural practice, neither did it recommend buying hastily a farm because it happened to have a fine outlook, or because the lawn was nicely seeded. But what was this good advice? Simply this: go out to the country; keep your eyes open; look around; select the farm which seems to suit you best; and then, if possible, hire with the owner of that farm for a season, and learn something about the back end of the place as well as of the front. If the farmer does not care to give more than board for such work as the urban man is able to do, he should stay with him just the same, and the journal in question, advised paying for board in preference to buying the farm without some knowledge of the occupation, and of the particular farm selected.

Advice has been broadcasted throughout the length and breadth of our land. Newspapers, public speakers, and even governments have been urging a "back-to-the-land" movement. Such a campaign must eventually be effectual in moving city people countryward, but the man not conversant with rural life, and not understanding land and its successful operation, is, unless he takes precautions, very likely to be soon sickened of his undertaking. Front lawns, nice drives, and beautiful outlooks may be satisfying to the eye, and, while they should (if at all possible) form an important part of every farm steading, they are not the most important consideration by a long way. What should concern the purchaser most is how the farm is adapted to produce greatest returns from the particular crop or crops which he chooses to grow, be they grain, live stock, fruit or special crops. The best way in which to be sure of this is to work on the place a season or two. Working as hired man may not seem profitable at the time, but it will generally prove its value in the end. In this way an intimate acquaintance with the characteristics of every field on the place may be had. The land with the cold, sour bottom in need of underdrainage cannot be hidden for a season; the hard clay knolls will show their nature; the weed pests of all seasons may be studied, and all the excellencies and shortcomings of the place are made known to the prospective purchaser.

It is not always and perhaps not often possible to hire to the man who wishes to sell, but it is, at least, possible to hire out or to obtain board on some farm, and here, perhaps, is the most valuable consideration in connection with the undertaking. It is a working knowledge of farm operations which is absolutely essential to success. Whether the prospective purchaser intends to work himself or to hire others to do it for him, it is necessary that he has a good idea of how things should be done, and the time necessary to do them. This practical knowledge cannot be obtained anywhere but right down on the farm actually engaged in the work. Agricultural colleges cannot teach practical farming to a man who never saw a farm. Neither can books and periodicals tell him how to hold a plow. True, they may help, but practical experience is the

foundation upon which all this superstructure must be built. Get the practical knowledge first, and then supplement it with all the college training deemed advisable. It would be just as foolish for the manager of a departmental store to quit his work and go and buy a farm for his employment without first knowing a few of the ins and outs of farming, as it would for a middle-aged farmer to sell his acres and, without preparation for the work, attempt to manage the departmental store. No matter what the business, it is necessary to learn it before attempting to manage it. It was good advice then when the paper previously referred to told its readers to know farming and the farm before purchasing. Better spend a year or two learning the game, and be happy ever after, than jump into it in a day to be sorry until your dying day. There is room on the farms of the country for thousands more. Intensive agriculture is gaining ground, but no business is helped by failures or dissatisfied participants. Know what you want first; then tackle it with a vigor which must eventually reap a rich reward.

Water Supply and Milk Flow.

In the purchase or lease of a farm for dairy purposes, an abundant and continuous supply of good water for the herd is a first consideration. It is important for the healthy maintenance of the animal, more so probably than is commonly supposed, if inferences may be drawn from recent teachings regarding the desirability of the free use of drinking water by man. During the heat of summer plenty of water is required to supply what is so freely given off in perspiration. As a winter ration or supplementary summer feed, one of the chief benefits of silage is due to its succulence,—the moisture lacking in cured fodder or in the brown pasture grass. Even though knee-deep, which it is not likely to be, the latter does not keep up the milk supply. We remember how well the cows milked on the juicy June grasses, but they are gone now, and, in most cases, fresh corn fodder for soiling is hardly at its best. Plenty of water must be accessible. If it does not flow into the cows, the milk will not flow into the pail. Fortunately, the law does not allow us to add it from the pump afterwards. The dairy cow will put up with a shortage of food even better than a scant water supply, and still maintain for a time a fair milking. This is reasonable from the basic fact that milk itself is about 88 per cent of water, and only some 12 per cent solids. Just think of that—nearly 88 lbs. out of every 100 lbs. of milk, water to begin with! The cow cannot continue taking it out of her body unless it goes in at her mouth. If the well or the spring in the field is running dry, so will the cow. Let us make no error about that. Unless we have fresh flowing or lakelet water, better lose no time in hitching a windmill or other engine on the well, so that the cows may drink at will two or three times per day. And give it to her clean and pure. Do not ask the patient and often long-suffering cow either to make milk out of nothing, or to eliminate all the filth and germs found in bad water. She has enough to do without acting as a microbe killer.

To classify as "no good", something in the farm experience of this season may not gratify one's self-esteem, but in the long run it may be worth more to us than what we plume ourselves under the label of "success."