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Farm Notes

Instructive Articles from the Ontario
Department of Agriculture

BOYS IN AGRICULTURE

The Junior Farmer Is Much to the Fore To-day.

Badly Handled in the Past — Too Much Book and Not Enough Boy — He is a Born Club Man — Rural School Fairs and Boys' Clubs Are Making Active Young Patriots.

(Contributed by Ontario Department of Agriculture, Toronto)

In agriculture the boy has arrived. He was a long time coming. His way has been as tortuous as a wild grapevine, and at times his reluctant feet lagged distressingly.

He Did Not Get a Fair Show at First.

To bring the boy into general agricultural work and study, all manner of efforts had been made. He was bullied and bribed, cuffed and coaxed, pinched and patted, whipped and whistled; yet scarcely a foot had he voluntarily gone forward until very recently.

The Old Taster Oil Policy.

At one time, figuratively speaking, he was held by the nose while nauseous doses from text-books of forbidding terminologies were forced down his unwilling throat, in order to give him a taste and enthusiasm for farming!

But to-day we have the boy genuinely interested in agriculture; open-eyed, open-minded, open-handed. Open-eyed, for he is looking at farming in a new light; open-minded, because he is now regarding agricultural instruction with a sympathetic understanding; open-handed, for he is ready, even eager, to seize the hoe-handle and wield it as proudly as if it were a field marshal's baton.

Too Much Book and Not Enough Boy.

Early methods to bring agricultural knowledge and the boy together failed because they lacked that most important thing in teaching known as "point of contact." There was too much book and not enough boy in the minds of the pedagogues. The lad gagged and choked mentally at a too early memorization of learned and (to him) meaningless phrases. It was like a Chinese dinner course, reverse action, starting with the desert and ending with the soup; but in this case the nuts were usually too hard for the youngster to crack.

The Boy is a Gangster—a Club Man.

Boys are gregarious; they flock. The boy, whether he lives in the city or the country is by nature a gangster. But call the gang a "club," and it gives an air to the affair, although the latter word has not always had an attractive meaning to the lad. The club collective is always more attractive than the club corrective.

The Boy Wants to Be a Doer of Things.

There is another powerful instinct in the boy:

"Johnny," enquired the Sunday School teacher, "would you like to go to heaven?"

"What's doing there, teacher?"

That's the case in a nutshell. Your real boy wants to be where they are doing things, and he wants to do them in company with "some of the other fellows."

School Fairs Have Helped the Farm Boy.

Rural School Fairs have done much to interest juniors in agriculture. To be an exhibitor, and perhaps a winner, at a fair has awakened the ambition of many a boy. To be able to show and win implies a knowledge of growing things. To know how to grow things mean observation, study and industry.

The first Rural School Fair was held in 1909, three schools uniting, and had an attendance of 250. In 1921 there were 449 fairs, embracing 3,847 schools, with an attendance of 345,259, over half of whom were juniors. At these fairs practically every branch of agriculture was covered, and the total entries of exhibits reached about 200,000.

Home Garden, Acre Profit, Baby Beef, and Hog raising contests have also stirred the farm boy to action and study.

Junior Farmer Improvement Associations.

These associations are made up of young men, many of whom have been trained through the School Fairs, and some of whom have taken short courses under the Agricultural Representative. They are local leaders in educational, business, and social endeavor, as well as being foremost in taking up new methods of agriculture. They have been active in organizing and conducting Inter-

Association Debates, County Judging Competitions, Ploughing Competitions, Banquets, Public Speaking Contests, Baseball Leagues, and Field Days.

These Junior Ploughing Matches have revived a long neglected phase of agricultural endeavor, and old ploughmen have expressed great satisfaction with the work of the lads.

Live Stock Judging Contests took place in thirty-three counties last year, and there have been many inter-county competitions. The winners had a free trip to the Chicago International Live Stock Show, and came back with a bigger vision of their calling.

Boys' and Girls' Live Stock Clubs.

The Boys' and Girls' Live Stock Clubs are doing much to develop the breeding of superior cattle, hogs, etc. About fifty of these Clubs are in existence.

Other activities of a useful and elevating character are engaged in by boys on Ontario farms, all of which suggest a keen, practical and intelligent acquaintance with agriculture, its literature, and its practice. In agriculture, the boy has arrived. —Thos. McGillivuddy, Statistics and Publications Branch, Toronto.

BEDDING FOR STABLES

Straw, Peat Moss, Sawdust and Shavings Considered.

Straw Preferred for Many Reasons — Measuring Hay in the Mow and in the Stack — Hand-feeding Lambs—Farm Trespassers Scored.

(Contributed by Ontario Department of Agriculture, Toronto.)

The materials used for bedding domestic animals are generally straw from the grain fields, peat moss from the swamp, or shavings from the saw or planing mill. Straw is used to a greater extent than any other material, first because of its abundance; secondly because the stable offers a medium for transferring this by-product of the field to manure, and thereby facilitating its return to the land; thirdly because it is a good absorbent of liquids. Straws from oats, peas, rye, wheat and oats vary in value as a litter or bedding material. The hard rye and wheat straws, while durable to the wear of animals, is not as good an absorbent as the softer oat, barley and pea straws. Wheat straw not being highly valued as a feed finds its greatest use as a stable bedding. The nitrogen, potash and phosphorus contained in a ton of wheat or rye straw has a value at commercial fertilizer prices of \$2.25, oat straw \$2.60, and barley straw \$2.10. Straws have a further value in that the organic matter content is large, and of such a nature as to be particularly valuable in soil improvement. Peat moss is valuable as an absorbent of liquids, it is also valuable for its nitrogen content. The manure from stables where peat moss is used as bedding is generally of considerably higher value than the manure from any other source. It has one objection in that it is not as clean as straw. Sawdust and shavings, while serving the purpose as a litter or bedding material, add little value to the manure. Useful as an aid in keeping the animals clean and preventing the loss of the liquid portion of the manure, sawdust or shavings serve a good purpose; but it must be remembered that the fertility value of sawdust is low. Those who have straw should use it. Those who have neither straw or peat moss should then use the sawdust or shavings.—L. Stevenson, Sec., Dept. of Agriculture, Toronto.

Farm Trespassers Scored.

Mrs. Bess Wilson, editor of the Redwood, Minn., Gazette, very properly censures town people who drive through country districts and raid the farmer of his tame and wild fruit and other products. "Everything that grows on a farmer's farm belongs to that farmer," is the way the Gazette puts it. "To take even wild fruit without his permission is as much a misdemeanor as to take his corn, potatoes or chickens."

Improving the Sink.

An old wooden sink was made sturdier by attaching a zinc drain board. Three shallow grooves were gouged into the zinc, and it was nailed to the wooden frame with a slight incline so the water easily drained back into the sink.