

# THE Farmer's Handy Book OF USEFUL INFORMATION

**T**HE various branches of the science of agriculture have occupied the foremost minds of the world in all ages. The discoveries made have been preserved and handed down to us through numberless books and papers, many of which containing most valuable information, are quite inaccessible to men engaged in the active practice of farming, while others again are so voluminous that a long search through their pages is necessary in order to obtain some desired information. To avoid this difficulty many encyclopedias, etc., have been published, none of them, however, applying solely to our Canadian conditions. The time has come when a concise work of ready reference thoroughly up-to-date is absolutely essential to every farmer in our land, if only to enable him to recall important facts which he has escaped his memory.

In issuing this book the object has been to give all the information possible, in the most concise and accessible form. With this end in view, the various facts and principles dealt with have been carefully classified and indexed.

The following outline of the contents of the book shows how wide its scope is, and how useful it is likely to be in the hands of people engaged in rural occupations.

## SYNOPSIS OF CONTENTS

### SECTION I.

**Almanac.**—Besides the usual information contained in all up-to-date calendars, the dates of all events of interest to farmers which have been fixed for the coming year will be given.

**Progress of Agriculture.**—An historical chapter showing the advance in the practice of agriculture, with other matters of interest to Canadians.

**Canada.**—This is a wide subject in general; but here only such facts relating to the Constitution of the Dominion and of the various Provinces, and the trade, area and resources of each of them as will be useful to farmers will be dealt with. Special regard will be paid to the newer Provinces in the West which are now so rapidly filling up with people who are not conversant with our institutions and government.

### SECTION II.

**The Soil.**—All things begin with the soil. It is the real source of all the wealth, civilization and comfort of the world, consequently we cannot know too much about it. This chapter contains a great deal of information in the fewest possible words. The classification and constituent parts of soils are dealt with and the natural indications of good and bad land pointed out. Connected with this are tables showing the effect of growing various crops and the best method of keeping up or restoring fertility. The rotations of crops which by long experiment have been found successful and which are adapted to our climate are also shown.

**Manures.**—This very essential matter is thoroughly discussed and the very best analysis of all forms of fertilizers, both barn-yard and commercial, are given. To be grown successfully, plants must be fed; why, when and how to do it are here told in detail.

**Water.**—A soil may be rich in plant food yet crops cannot be produced upon it. This may arise from a variety of causes, the principal ones we have to contend with being the want of water or an excessive quantity of it. The absence of water is a difficult problem to deal with, but it is one which we are now called upon to solve not only in certain natural arid districts, but even in those parts of the country which were originally well watered. The question of irrigation in arid districts and the conservation of soil moisture in districts where the supply is now likely to fail, is fully covered, and the best methods of overcoming the difficulty pointed out.

**Drainage.**—When water is in excess, drainage is necessary. Several methods have been practised successfully for a long period. The simplest of these are described clearly, so that any farmer can apply them to his own circumstances.

**Alkali Land.**—In what is known as the "North-West" there is a large extent of land now unproductive because it is so heavily impregnated with certain salts that the crops usually cultivated will not grow upon it. Many experiments have been tried for the purpose of redeeming this land, and some of them have been successful. The methods adopted which have given good results are here set forth, together with a list of forage plants which have been found capable of establishing themselves upon soil of this character.

### SECTION III.

#### FARM CROPS.

**How Plants Grow.**—In order to profitably grow a field, garden or orchard crop, it is absolutely necessary that the grower should know the processes involved in the production of a plant from seed to maturity. Here the story is told in simple language, technicalities being avoided as far as possible.

**Cereals.**—This is a most important chapter, for not only are the requirements, method of cultivation, and varieties of all our principal grain crops described and discussed, but the average yield per acre of all the principal countries is compared with our own. This, if studied thoroughly, should serve as a salutary lesson, and lead to results which would add enormously to the country's wealth.

**Pasture and Forage Crops.** clover, grasses, etc.—This covers a very wide field and one that deserves more attention than it has hitherto received in Canada. There are many plants of easy cultivation in this connection which would undoubtedly be more generally grown if their value was understood.

**Root Crops.**—A new branch of farming industry has arisen in growing sugar beets. This promises to be very useful and profitable. Special attention has therefore been paid to the method of cultivation of the beet and the uses to which its by-products can be put.

**Minor Crops.**—Of late years tobacco, flax, etc., have been made a specialty in some districts and have proved profitable. The effect of these crops upon the land and their requirements as plants are pointed out.