



We Welcome Practical Progressive Ideas

FARM AND DAIRY & RURAL HOME



The Recognized Exponent of Dairys in Canada

Trade increases the wealth and glory of a country; but its real strength and stamina are to be looked for among the cultivators of the land—Lord Chatham

VOL. XXXV.

PETERBORO, ONT., APRIL 20, 1916

No. 15

The Experiences of a Back-to-the-Lander

We Have Had Our Disappointments and Reverses But We Like the Life

COWPER SMITH, ROCKY FORD, ALBERTA

I HAVE seen several enquiries in Farm and Dairy from people with but little capital, who think they would like to be livin'; on the land. Perhaps it may be of interest if I give a brief outline of my experiences on the land.

In 1913, my wife and I decided that we would try farming, and having considered the matter we came to the conclusion that the best way would be to take a C. P. R. farm, so, in the spring of 1914, we came to Calgary and decided on the locality. When all was ready, my wife, with two small babies, my brother-in-law and myself, came out here. It was a cold, dreary day, or, rather, night, when we arrived, and to add to the discomfort it was raining. We got out a mattress, a small oil stove, and a few provisions. We got the babies off to bed as quickly as possible, and we ourselves, thoroughly tired out, rested on the mattress on the floor.

Our furniture had been forwarded in advance, and we expected to get it within a day or two, and to make the best of it in the meantime. Our neighbors loaned us a small heating stove, a table and three chairs, and this was all we had until our furniture arrived, which it did "more or less" after seven weeks. I shall never forget that shiver weeks. It was bitter cold, and several times the mattress on which we slept was frozen to the floor. We had nothing to cook with, except the heating stove loaned us and a small oil stove, suitable only for heating a bedroom. We had no coal, so had to chop wood four-and-one-half miles away and rely on our neighbors passing to carry it back for us, as we had no horses or wagon at the start, nor did we until the fall of our first year of farming, for we had very little cash. I had to sue a debtor once for some \$600, and have never got a cent back, although I obtained judgment against him in both courts. (I mention this so that you may understand how it was we started out with so little capital.)

The First Year on the Land.

The first year I paid for 20 acres to be put into crop, and by working for others managed to get wood, fence posts, etc., hauled for me. We got six cows from the C. P. R., and I made arrangements with a neighbor to help aim get in his hay, and we were to have one-third as pay-

ment for that and other work I had done for him. He, however, went back on his word, and I was in a quandary to know how to get up another 10 tons. Finally I made arrangements to have 10 tons cut and raked into windrows, and we put it up ourselves. We had no horses or wagon, but we got that 10 tons harvested by loading it on to a square carpet and hauling it in ourselves. I wonder if any reader has ever tried hay making that way. It sure was hard work.

In the fall I was able to get a good team, wagon and hay rack, and it was a satisfaction to be more independent. We planted an acre of potatoes and got a fair crop. Our oat crop, however,

wire and posts to make a really secure fence, and, consequently, the range cattle have gotten quite a few tons out of the 50 the stack contained. We were lucky this year to have a kind neighbor who loaned us his disk and harrow and several other implements, without which we would have been unable to make good. It is this question of implements that the beginner finds the most difficult to cope with. Most of our so-called neighbors will only lend implements in return for a great deal of work. Even then I have worked for some neighbors and would not be loaned the implement when it was of any use to me.

To any city man who is thinking of starting farming with, say \$1,000 or \$1,500, I would advise him if possible to choose his neighbors or make

arrangements, if possible, to borrow implements in exchange for those you have. On the other hand, do not buy any more implements at first than are absolutely necessary, but try to make arrangements to exchange machinery with a neighbor. You cannot afford, however, to wait two weeks for a seeder, or perhaps longer for a disk, but yet you cannot afford to get a seeder or binder when starting on \$1,500.

This year we put in about two and one-half acres of potatoes and got 300 bushels from them which is good considering that it was only the second time the land had been plowed. All kinds of roots grow well in this district.

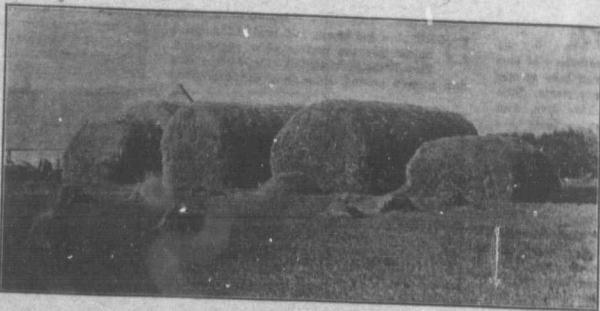
Our Live Stock.

Last spring was a poor one for raising chicks, and out of 200 incubator raised chicks I have only about 100 left. I believe, however, that the place is ideal for chicken raising, as it is usually so dry our foot.

In regard to dairying, we have only grade cows, but they do well, and the hay costs us nothing but the cutting and stacking, although I do not think the hay we have is very suitable for cows. We sell our cream and the prices range from 33 to 37 cents a pound of butter-fat. Our cows when fresh give about 4 lbs. of milk a day, but we have not been able to feed them as they ought to be fed, and so am not in a position to judge what the profits might be under better conditions.

We have had splendid results from our kitchens.

(Concluded on page 6.)



The Hay Crop of an Alberta Farm.

The native grasses of the prairie are amongst the most nutritious in the world. For the production of either milk or beef they are not excelled. In most sections of the West they are still largely relied upon for the hay supply. And almost invariably the hay is stacked in the open, as seen in the illustration.

was only fit for green feed, as that year was very dry. We raised about 80 chickens, and we had four pigs to kill for winter use. We raised five calves that year, and I had the good fortune to be given a tiny colt. We had no income at all, however, except from cream, butter and eggs.

Work of the Second Year.

In the spring of 1915 I got two more horses and a plow, and managed to get in 30 acres of oats, 18 of wheat, some green feed and three acres of potatoes. We then continued breaking new land for summer fallow, and we have now about 80 acres broken. I did not have sufficient cash to put up a proper fence between the pasture and crops, and we had great difficulty trying to keep the cattle out.

It is in such ways as these that a man with too little capital has to suffer. It was the same with our hay stack this fall. I could not get enough