

THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE AND HOME MAGAZINE.

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THE DOMINION.

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Address—THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE, or
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Potato Growing.

To the Editor FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

The plan which I would prefer in preparing the soil for potatoes is to give the land a good coating of manure in the fall, then plow pretty deep, covering all the manure; then leave it until spring, when I would give it a good harrowing to smooth it down and start weeds. Then about the middle of May I would plow about three or four inches deep, and drop the potatoes in the third furrows, so that the sets will be from fourteen to eighteen inches apart in the row. Some varieties may be planted closer, about a foot apart. The large growing kinds require more room than the smaller early kinds. After planting I would harrow to start any weed seeds which may be in the soil, and repeat harrowing about every ten days or so, to kill the weeds when they are in the seed leaf. After the potatoes are about two inches above ground, I would run a horse cultivator between the rows, and repeat the operation once or twice, as necessary. Then when the potatoes show signs of forming buds for flowering, put the hilling moulds on the cultivator, and run it between the rows, throwing a light furrow towards the potato shaws. This helps to keep the tubers covered from the sun and weather. Pull out any weeds which appear among the rows. Never leave any to form seeds.

While I prefer this way of planting and preparing the soil for potatoes, still I have tried and had good success with several other ways. Plowing stubble land in the spring and planting the potatoes in the third furrow, and keeping weeds down by harrowing afterwards, gives very good crops in this neighborhood. I have also grown good crops without giving any cultivation after planting until the potatoes were dug in the fall. The only plan that did not do well with me was the following: I opened the land into drills and filled in lots of manure, then dropped the potatoes in the drill and covered up by dividing the drills. This plan was not a success.

I grew thirty-three varieties of potatoes last season, and while I find them giving very heavy crops, still the quality is not so good as usual, and I found the tubers more inclined to grow irregular in shape than I ever noticed in this country before. Of all the potatoes grown here, none have given as good satisfaction as the variety called Morning Star. I have grown this kind for years, and it always gives

good crops and good table qualities; in fact, I don't know any better for a main crop. For early potatoes I prefer Salzer's Earliest. It is a very good sort and of good table quality. Freeman is a very good sort, and so are Rose of the North, King of the Roses, Burpee's Early, and several others. Early Market is good, if used early. With me it grows to a large size, and is hollow. About five years ago I grew about seventy kinds of potatoes, and out of that number I have not got more than six varieties in my collection to-day, the rest being discarded for one reason or another. The largest and heaviest sorts that I grew last year were Seedling No. 83 C. E. F., Belle, Victor, Puritan, Queen of the Meadows, and Maggie Murphy.

For seed I prefer an average size potato, cut in two, always having two eyes in each set. Although I have planted them whole, cut to one eye in set, and got good crops from all these ways, still I prefer two eyes to the set. I notice Mr. McKay, Indian Head, in his paper recommends cutting a week before planting, and storing the cut potatoes in bags until planting time. Whilst I have no objection to having the potatoes cut a week before planting, I would strongly object to storing them in bags. I would spread them on the floor and cover with a horse blanket or with loose bags to keep the sun from them until ready to plant. But for this part of Manitoba I am of opinion the following will give good satisfaction: Remove the potatoes from the cellar or pit to the field, and cut them into sets while the team is opening the furrows, then plant and cover up with the plow, cultivate to keep down weeds, and a good crop may be looked for in the fall.

I will give you my experience in the matter of digging and securing the crop at some future time.

G. S. MCGREGOR.

Lansdowne Municipality, Man.

Summer-fallow Every Alternate Year for Wheat.

To the Editor FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

The soil of this district is a clay loam with a yellowish clay subsoil. In preparing for the first crop, experience has taught us that by breaking the sod as early and as thinly as possible in the spring, then backsetting it as soon as well rotted (not too deep, just sufficient to give it a nice smooth surface), is far ahead of any other method. By so doing it enables one to raise at least two good wheat crops before either manuring or summer-fallowing, which latter method I invariably adopt every alternate year after the second crop has been grown from the original soil, unless for oats. I then sow oats upon the land that would otherwise be summer-fallowed. As for the quality of seed, I heartily agree with Mr. Bedford's advice to use the very best of seed, taken from the very best land, and be cautious about having it free from fowl seeds, and bluestoned thoroughly.

I think it a very foolish risk for a farmer to act as I hear some purpose doing this season, by sowing an inferior grade of damp wheat. Such a "penny wise and pound foolish" system is sure to bring disaster.

As to the mode of sowing, we have proved conclusively that the shoe drill is the drill, no matter whether sown east, west, north or south. As for harrowing after the drill, a great deal depends upon the state in which the ground is in. If mellow, with the fiber pretty well worked out, I usually have the harrowing all done that is necessary, after which the roller is used, followed by the seeder, or if upon backsetting, one turn crosswise of the harrow. We then find the high winds in the spring do not get such a chance to uncover the seed. Several years ago the disk harrow was in great demand, being used principally upon deep breaking, but experience with us has proved it to be a failure, consequently they are only to be found set away in some odd fence-corner to rot.

In reference to a regular-rotation system to be followed, we find it very difficult, owing to the large fields and being unable to manure to any extent. Still, as I said before, our only salvation is the summer-fallowing after the second crop is taken off, and every alternate year, unless one wishes to put in some peas, oats or barley.

WM. GLASS.

Argyle Municipality, Man.

Some Valuable Hints for the New Settler.

To the Editor FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

As the probabilities are that we will have a large influx of new settlers this spring, many of whom will settle on homesteads and new farms, a little advice from those of us who have been here a number of years and learned much by experience might not be amiss. I know with myself, and I presume many others, the experience gained by farming in Ontario was of little use in starting on a homestead in this country. And while I made many mistakes, they would have been more only for the advice of those who had been here before me. As the cultivation and growing of wheat is the chief industry for a beginner, a few points on this subject might be helpful.

Breaking.—This should be done between 20th May and 1st of July, not too deep, but deep enough to turn under all the grass; backset in August or September from one to two inches deeper. If time is plentiful can be harrowed in the fall. Scrub land or loose prairie can be broken deeper and disk harrowed without backsetting. Oxen are the best for

a beginner, as the cost is less, and they will live on the prairie grass and do good work.

Seeding.—Sow as early as land will work, and don't be afraid to harrow well. The advice given me was to "harrow plenty, and then give another stroke." Sow with press drill, $1\frac{1}{2}$ bushels per acre; still, in old times we sowed by hand 2 bushels per acre, and the crops of those times have not been beaten since. Give one stroke of light harrow after seeder, going the same way as the seeder. I have not been able to perceive any difference in sowing north and south or east and west. A dry year, when the roots would need to be shaded, east and west, would be best; and a wet season, when sun would be required, north and south best. Heavy winds are liable to come from any point from south to north by the west. As to variety of wheat, Red and White Fyfe are the best varieties. Seed should invariably be treated with bluestone, thoroughly dissolved in warm water—one pound to eight or ten bushels, and every kernel moistened.

Harvest.—Don't let wheat get too ripe before cutting, especially after August 25th. It will stand cutting when quite green and soft, and if a frost comes a day or two will make a big difference. Don't stack until grain is dry and hard. Don't try to make nice stacks by "kneeing" down the outside sheaves; place them with a fork, and don't put any weight on them; keep the center full and tramp it all you like. Sow enough oats and barley to insure plenty feed, and put it in what you break after 1st July. In breaking, seeding and harvesting, stay with your job, and don't let anything interfere with your work.

F. BOLTON.

Pembina Municipality, Man.

Some Criticisms on Barn Plans.

To the Editor FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

In your issue of March 6th I notice the plan of two barns in Manitoba, which, to my mind, are not laid out to economize time or space. In the plan of Mr. Little's barn his stable is sixty feet long, and he has but one row of horses, two of cattle, and two feed passages. Now, if six feet had been added to the length, he could have had four rows of animals fed from the two feed passages. I also notice his calves' mangers are twenty inches wide, which I think too wide for calves, as they are apt to get into them and stand in them. Then his gutters are twelve inches wide, which is two small, except for calves; for cattle they need to be eighteen inches, so that they will hold two days' manure, which makes it unnecessary to clean the stable on Sunday or any other day when it is not convenient; and it also keeps the floor behind them dry.

I also think six feet six inches quite sufficient length of floor for the largest cows, and a manger eighteen or twenty inches, making about eight feet. The length of block floor under my horses is eight feet, and I find it just right for most horses. The passage across center of stable will make it very unhandy to arrange troughs in front of the cattle for water, unless twice as much piping and extra floats are used.

In the plan of Mr. Sanderson's stables, which are sixty by sixty-five feet, I think they are so cut up with harness room, feed room, root house, and silo, as to accommodate very few stock. I can only see stalls for twelve head of cattle, with one window for light. These cattle are evidently intended to eat all the turnips, as they are so far from the cattle in the open shed, and no way to get there but through the horse stable. The root house on the west side shuts out all light and the sheep pen on the north, and the open shed and loose feeding stable on the east practically shut out all light on these sides, and I fail to see where the light is to come from for the harness room and feed room, which are used every day.

Now, I think the old plan of bank barn and stable is hard to beat. I mean like the one on the Experimental Farm, Brandon, or J. E. Smith's, with cattle and horses standing crosswise of the stable, each facing the feed passages, with root house and silo on the bank side of stable, and doors into root house at the end of each feed passage, and when no high partitions are put up the light from all sides makes it pleasant to work, even when the doors need to be kept shut. I have been in a stable not one hundred miles from here where the owner, who is an intelligent man, had to light matches to let me see some of his stock in broad daylight, and yet he expected the animals to thrive.

I think Mr. Sanderson's plan for keeping the tank from freezing a good one, as the warmth from the stable goes up around the tank.

Oakland Municipality, Man. W. CHALMERS.

[It would seem, in view of the experience of J. G. Barron, described in our April 5th issue, that it is unnecessary to let the heat of the stable pass up round the water tank, as in Mr. Barron's new stable his sixty-five barrel water tank was untouched by frost during this past winter. His tank is encased in a close boarded chamber a little larger than the tank, otherwise no special protection was given.—Ed. F. A.]

Rosebank Farmers' Elevator.

A number of farmers in the vicinity of Rosebank are applying for incorporation, with a capital of \$10,000, to build and operate a grain elevator at that point. The following are among the principal movers: Jas. Riddell, M. P. P.; Chas. Mather, Peter Thompson, W. Davis, S. Topley, A. Bruce, and T. Smith.