

# QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS. Miscellaneous

## SEED-BED WITHOUT PLOWING.

If land is clean of foul seeds, or weeds, and in a good state of cultivation, can as good crop be raised by working the stubble with some sort of cultivator to get a seed-bed instead of plowing. How do you think it would result on land that had been in hoed crops if one were to prepare it for wheat in this way?

YOUNG FARMER.

Ans.—Experiments have shown that maximum yields are derived when certain bacteria in the soil are given a chance to act on as great portion of the soil as possible. Plowing the land at least once a year gives these bacteria this desired opportunity. In addition, the question of soil-moisture must be considered. Thorough surface cultivation on soils that have not become too compact during the summer might retain sufficient moisture, but plowing, as a rule, increases the moisture-holding capacity. On your soil, provided it had not become compact, and again provided next season is a favorable one, you might obtain as good crop by surface working as by plowing, though this practice cannot be generally advised. It is wise always to prepare for a bad season, if maximum returns are to be expected. This means the use of the plow at least once a year. The root ground, if on light soil, and if it is impossible to find time to plow in the fall, might be sown without plowing with reasonable chances for a fair crop. Particularly is this the case where potatoes were grown.

## CEMENT AND COLORING FOR CEMENT-BLOCK HOUSE.

How many pounds of cement would it take to build a block house 30 x 30 feet, with walls 20 feet high? What would I get to color the cement blocks a dark brown, something similar to the Cataract stone? Is painting them a success; will it stand? Does it injure the blocks to make them and leave them lying over a winter?

D. H. T.

Ans.—A dwelling-house of this description would be built with a wall 10 inches thick on first story and 8 inches thick on the second story. We presume that the height given, 20 feet, is the height of wall above basement, and we have figured accordingly. If part of this 20-foot wall is included in the foundation of the dwelling, we should know that, as our figures would be somewhat differently arranged.

We desire to advocate a safe thickness of wall. A building 30 feet square, with walls 10 feet high and 10 inches thick, built from concrete blocks at a proportion 1 to 5, will take thirty-four barrels of cement. One 30 feet square, with walls 10 feet high and 8 inches thick, will take 30 barrels of cement. In this case, if the walls are to be 8 inches thick from top to bottom, and 20 feet high, it will take 60 barrels of cement, and if 10 inches thick, from top to bottom, it will take 68 barrels of cement.

In order to color cement blocks dark brown, use 50 pounds oxide of iron to 1 barrel of cement and 2 pounds peroxide of manganese, or about the same quantity of black powder mortar stain. We cannot specify the exact amount required of black or red, as different sands will require different quantities of coloring materials. The best method will be to use the amount here specified, making up a few blocks, and allow them to dry, then if they are a little too dark use less black, and if not dark enough use a little more black; if not dense enough use a little more red. The powders should be thoroughly mixed with the cement while in a dry state.

Painting the blocks is not a success. Exposure to the weather during winter will not hurt the blocks, providing they have been kept watered, and at a temperature of 60 to 70 degrees for the first twenty-four hours, and then for a couple of days at about the same temperature without watering. During the period of exposure to the cold, crystallization will not proceed, but as soon as warm weather comes, the blocks should be watered so that the process of crystallization may go on in a normal way.

H. POCKOCK.

# BARRED ROCK COCKEREL MARKINGS—ROUND EGGS FOR PULLETS—CHANGING MILKERS—TWIN RAM VS. SINGLE RAM.

1. What are the markings of a Barred Rock cockerel, single comb?

2. Is there anything in the belief that round eggs hatch out pullets?

3. Does changing milkers make a cow fail in her milk?

4. Is a single ram as likely to get twins as a twin ram?

D. H. T.

Ans.—1. A Barred Rock cockerel has grayish-white plumage, each feather being crossed by regular narrow, parallel, sharply-defined, dark bars, not a positive black, free from brownish tinge or metallic sheen; the light and dark bars are of nearly equal width, and extend throughout the length of the feathers on all parts of the bird, the combination of overlapping feathers giving the plumage a bluish appearance. Shanks and toes are yellow; beak yellow; face, comb, wattles, and ear-lobes, bright red; eyes bright red, or bay.

2. Yes, round eggs, when hatched, may give pullets—but the chicks are just as likely to be male birds. To prove it, select three or four settings of round eggs next spring. If the rule were pullets from round eggs, poultrymen would be able to raise whichever sex best suited their needs.

3. A great deal depends on the milker. Any condition that excites a cow or makes her nervous results in smaller quantities of milk. A stranger milking may have that effect, but one who is well known to the cow, and also is a good milker, may perform the operation without any reduction of flow. It is possible that a change of milkers may even increase the flow. The best plan, however, is to have a competent milker milk the same cows each time. Other conditions being equal, this plan gives the best results.

4. The occurrence of singles, twins or triplets, depends largely on the mother. A strong ram, a single, may be depended on to give as many twins from the same flock as a twin ram of similar type. It is possible that a twin ram from a twin-producing strain may, however, transmit twin-producing capacities to future generations, though this is problematical.

## GOSSIP.

The Iowa State College authorities, Ames, Iowa, have secured 20 head of prize-winning Shorthorn breeding and fat cattle from Ohio's champion herd, the property of Carpenter & Ross, Mansfield, Ohio. This collection includes the International prize calf herd, the famous Canadian International champion yearling steer, Roan Jim, one of the greatest steers ever shown in America. This will furnish those who attend the short course in stock-judging, January 4th to 16th, an excellent opportunity to study the best types of Shorthorns obtainable on the continent.

The first sheep imported into Australia came from Cape Colony, and were very inferior. Three years after the first importation another batch of fifty ewes and one ram were sent from the Cape, and these also failed so completely that the official report to the effect that Australia was unsuitable for sheep seemed to be fully confirmed. The real pioneer of the sheep-raising industry was Mr. Macarthur, a young officer who arrived in New South Wales in 1790. He obtained grants of land and proceeded to stock them from sources other than the Cape, procuring ewes from India, and rams of Anglo-Spanish descent. His enterprise succeeded, but he owed the great stimulus his sheep-farming received to the result of some misconduct of his own. The Colonial authorities had him arrested for some offence, and he was sent to England to be tried. The home authorities refused to try him, as no witnesses had been sent, and Mr. Macarthur was set free. He bought some Merino rams and returned to Australia. Sixteen years later he sold wool from their descendants at 10s. 4d. per lb., and his fortune was made.



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