

The Farmer's Advocate and Home Magazine

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EDITORIAL.

Do not slight the road work.

Kill weeds while they are small.

Keep all gates closed and all gaps up. It will save steps.

There is only one type of hog for Canada, and that the bacon type.

Carry a few tools to the field each day and save trips to the barn.

There will be little time on the farms this year to listen to agents.

It is necessary to cultivate corn and roots in a wet season as well as in a dry year.

Shade for the hens and the chickens, too, means more summer eggs and more rapid growth of chicks.

A few strokes with the harrows as the crop is coming through may save koeing in the corn and potatoes.

It is time for the cow which does not pay to go to the block, but it is poor economy to butcher profitable producers.

It is encouraging to meet an old-timer who relates stories of several springs which were later and wetter than that of 1916.

Every farming community this year should be formed into groups of farmers to change work and facilitate farm operations.

One thing seems certain: So long as one great nation stands armed to the teeth, all other nations are safer with a thorough system of preparedness.

It is time to plant corn, but many are not ready. Get it in as soon as possible, but do not worry if planting is a few days late. The weatherman has given us a late season.

The man on heavy land with poor natural drainage, and who has a thorough system of underdrains properly put in, has had a good demonstration of their value this spring.

The shortage of help has a tendency toward more slipshod methods in fruit growing this year. There is promise of a big crop. It must be clean to be saleable at profitable prices.

Every fattened animal sold off the farm should be made "prime." There is a good margin of profit in making farm stock prime over the prices paid for ordinary stock. The same applies to farm produce.

It might do some agricultural officials a little good to get out among farmers occasionally. In the same week, not so long ago, that a prominent official of the Dominion Department of Agriculture made a speech, in which he stated that horses were becoming scarce in Canada, a representative of this paper, who was right out among farmers getting first-hand information, was met with this statement by men who had horses to sell: "Horses are plentiful and getting cheaper all the time." Perhaps both statements are exaggerations, but, at any rate, they do not correspond very closely.

There is a Limit.

The expression is commonly heard coming from those who know more about stocks and bonds, and hardware and drygoods, and groceries and boots and shoes than they do about agriculture, that in their opinion Canadian farms are not producing more than one-third to one-half of what they are capable of producing. We are ready to admit at the outset that most farms in this country could be so worked as to produce more than they do, but we are not ready to believe, nor is it possible for anyone to show, how production from the land could be so increased at a profit to the producer, particularly with the present high cost of production, due to scarcity of labor and other causes. Doubling or trebling production would mean first possibly more than doubling or trebling the men engaged therein. Vastly more farmyard manure and commercial fertilizer would be necessary; more capital would be necessary in the business, as machinery for production would have to be increased, and then in a normal year what would it mean? Such a wholesale multiplication of the products of the farm would more than likely mean a lowering of prices, which would eventually show the producer that there is a limit to profitable production and that the law of diminishing returns applies with all its force to such operations. There is practically no limit to the possibilities of increasing production, but the man engaged therein must be careful not to exceed the limit of profitable production. There would be no use of growing fifty bushels of a crop per acre, in place of twenty-five, if the increased twenty-five cost more to get than it would sell for at market prices. There will be little danger this year of many of the farms in the country, however, reaching the limit of profitable production. Men are too scarce and prices fairly high, but just to point out that some of the talk we hear, about the laxity of the farmer in his producing enterprises, is without foundation we call attention to the fact that farmers generally produce about all they well can with the help they have, and that beyond a certain limit increased production might be made at a loss.

A Crop to Experiment With.

An old plant of which there is a great deal being written as a new crop, and one which is possibly deserving of more consideration than it has been given, is sweet clover. We believe that there is room for a great deal of individual experimental work with this crop. At no time have we advised its wide use until the grower has convinced himself that it is a profitable crop to be grown under his conditions. We have found it being used for pasture, for hay, for soiling crop, and as a crop to build up the soil to good advantage. There is a demand for a crop something of the nature of sweet clover. It is possible to put this crop in just after seeding, sowing it alone, twenty pounds per acre, and get a fairly good cutting of hay the same season, that is, if the season is favorable. Thus it might be used as a catch crop, where other crops for hay had failed. It may be sown in the same manner and used for late summer and early fall pasture, which is an advantage under some conditions. It may be sown in the spring and cut as a soiling crop the same season, and, if cut high enough, and judiciously handled, will, as is the case in the former instances, remain in the ground and produce one or two hay crops the next season. Where land is poor, be it clay or sand, sweet clover will grow, and if cut or plowed down the roots or the entire crop is valuable as a soil builder. Again, it will grow where alfalfa fails, and, while some hold that it might be a substitute for red clover, and that it could not be a substitute for alfalfa, it may be used to very good

advantage in taking the place of alfalfa. Of course, it is a biennial, but as such, grows more feed than common red clover, and has a more beneficial action on the soil. Cattle at Weldwood eat it greedily as pasture, green feed, or hay, and analysis shows it to be as good feed as red clover or alfalfa. Where a man has any of these special conditions, he might be able to use sweet clover to advantage. It should not be allowed to grow rank and woody, should be sown thickly, and should be cut early, and the grower should be careful to cut it high, so as to leave a rosette of leaves for the future plant; otherwise it will be killed. If cut before seeding, it is very easily cleaned out. The plant grown as a crop is not a weed.

Make Farming as Easy as Possible.

The twentieth-century farmer must, if he is to make the greatest possible success of his farming operations, plan to make farming as easy as possible. This does not mean that he can escape work, but it does mean that in this day and age as much as possible of the work must be done through the help of different kinds of power, machines, and farm conveniences if the returns at the end of each year are to show a favorable margin on the right side of the ledger. In the past the supposed drudgery connected with farm work has militated against the proper position of the calling in the affairs of men. There should be no drudgery on the farm at the present time. We are speaking now of normal years and not of war-time conditions. It will generally pay the farmer better to use wide implements, and wide machines, to use engines, motors and the various kinds of power available, to ride a cart behind the harrows, in fact, to ride all the farm implements he can, to make the stables handy by means of feed and litter carriers and other devices for the purpose, in fact, to plan everything to save steps by system, than it will to hire the extra men necessary where good planning and up-to-date machinery and conveniences are not made use of. These things, available to all progressive men, will pay the interest on the money invested and will save more money to the owner, while at the same time they make his work lighter and put him in a position to the better enjoy his occupation.

The farmer is not the only one who should have the advantage of modern conveniences. The woman in the home is even more entitled to consideration. Domestic help is not available in rural districts, and in many cases the homes are not well laid out or well equipped with labor-saving devices. Farm homes should not be large, but should be handy. Put water in the house, both hard and soft, at small expense, and save thousands of steps and much back-aching work for the women. Every home that has a cellar, and every home should have one, should be equipped with a dumb-waiter to save steps. The house would be the better of a furnace for heating, and an oil stove for summer use is a boon to the farm housewife, because it gives her the advantages that her city friends have in gas or electricity. It heats anything quickly, but does not over-heat the room. There are many other things which go to make work lighter in the home, such as up-to-date washing machines, vacuum sweepers and many other labor lighteners, and then, where a hired man is kept, if at all possible, it is advisable, from the standpoint of work in the house as well as for the welfare of the man, to keep married help and supply a cottage, which saves work and cooking in the farm home and gives the man the advantage of a home of his own. Every other industry is so managed as to make the work as light as possible for those engaged in it, and the facilities for lightening farm work are available; moreover, they are profitable where installed.