

# The Farmer's Advocate and Home Magazine

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## EDITORIAL.

The present political situation in Canada will never constitute a glorious part of Canadian political history.

Plenty of moisture in the soil will not make a corn crop. The soil must be stirred and the weeds kept down.

Unless a third party arises to upset the applecart, the United States will have a newspaper man for the next President.

Hay will be scarce and high in price in Eastern Canada next winter. Save all the roughage and take good care of the straw.

The Board of Commerce still lives, but its chances of growing up into a virile, useful adult are slim indeed. It had too much sickness during childhood.

It's an economical policy to rear calves cheaply, but the dominant aim should be to rear them well. A stunted calf never develops into a first-class cow.

The Toronto market has been fed up these last few weeks with light, unfinished cattle. Better finishing is imperative. Cold, washy stuff is usually sold at a sacrifice.

Potato production nowadays means a steady conflict with "worm and beetle, blight and tempest," and no one can expect to succeed without making proper use of the spraying outfit.

Many soils in Eastern Canada require lime, but lime is not a panacea. A simple experiment would reveal to every farmer the requirements of his soil, and he could then set about to rectify any unfavorable condition.

Save for seed any second-growth clover that looks promising. More clover seed should be sown each spring, and there is no better way of working this improvement than by producing seed in moderate quantities on the home farm. There is a good market also for home-grown seed.

The basis of good agriculture is first-class seed. It is the same with farm crops as with live stock; if we do not take advantage of the inherent possibilities wrapped up in the kernel of grain, we cannot expect the best results. We must work in co-operation with Nature, and not leave it all to the partner.

Whenever there is a large crop, especially of basket and small fruits, a good marketing policy is to get the product moving rapidly into consumption. A good average price for the whole crop brings better returns in the end than a high price for a proportion of it to be followed by a serious slump. An effort should also be made at the beginning of the season to put only real good stuff on the market in order to whet the appetite for more. Immature fruit or poor quality shocks consumers, and they do not recover from it throughout that marketing season.

The Maritime Provinces are forging ahead in dairying, with special emphasis on the manufacture of butter. The market for this is good, and only the finished product of the farm is disposed of. Creameries are doing a great deal to build up certain districts in the East, but many more communities could well take advantage of the centralized creameries already in existence. The effect of a creamery on a community is very marked. It is the forerunner of prosperity, more comforts and higher standards of living.

## The Need of Lime in Agriculture.

There are certain portions of Ontario soils that are badly in need of lime, but nowhere is the need of it so manifest as in the Maritime Provinces. Crops in the East could be increased tremendously were the soil neutralized by proper and sufficient applications of lime. Why the soils of the Maritime Provinces happen to be so deficient in this one ingredient is difficult to say, but some are inclined to think that it is due to the heavy annual precipitation. However, the need of lime is obvious, and farmers in the Maritime Provinces would do well to study, by experiment, the actual needs of their own farms, and set about to rectify the acid condition of the land they till. Nova Scotia farmers have been in a position to obtain ground limestone, as well as lime in other forms, and a great many have taken advantage of the opportunity. Nevertheless, what lime has been applied has not begun to cover even in a small way the soils which are badly in need of it.

The same need of lime is apparent in Prince Edward Island. Farmers there in the neighborhood of bays have long been applying quantities of shell-mud, which contains a liberal percentage of lime. Some bays have now become exhausted, and it will be necessary to transport this mud for some considerable distance, in many cases. The Island Government has been investigating a certain limestone deposit, and their intention is to exploit this quarry for the good of the Island soils.

The greater part of New Brunswick is also in need of lime. A recent survey showed that from two to two-and-a-half tons of ground limestone per acre would be required to rectify the acid condition of the soil, and the Provincial Government has been interested in the matter. The New Brunswick Department of Agriculture has entered into contract to develop one quarry near the city of St. John, and farmers everywhere in New Brunswick will be able to obtain lime at a fixed price.

Where lime is badly needed, one does not obtain the direct benefit from barnyard manure, green manure, or commercial fertilizers that should accrue. While lime is not a direct fertilizer in itself, it is necessary to assist in making plant food available and farmers cannot get the best crops where the soil is lacking in lime. It should be understood, however, that lime is not a panacea. Too many think they have performed their full duties when they apply lime to the soil. Lime is a curse rather than a benefit when all the plant food is forced out of the soil by the application of lime, and no effort is made to replenish, with plant food and humus, the depleted fields. It is an old saying that, "Lime enriches the father and impoverishes the son," and this is quite true where one depends upon lime alone as a soil builder and replenisher.

## What the Market Reports Tell Us.

Market reports are a guide to market conditions and ruling prices, but they can never tell us what values of live stock or other produce will be two, three or six months in advance. Events occur so quickly and unexpectedly in these abnormal times that it is hazardous indeed to risk any great investment on market prophecies. One thing market reports do tell us, however, and it is that the offering of poor, light, unfinished live stock bring very little reward to the man who rears them. It is not the big, heavy-finished bullock that always commands the premium but the medium-sized, tidy, breedy-looking, well-finished steer. The difference between good and common steers frequently amounts to three and four dollars per cwt., while five and six dollars is frequently noted as the difference in price between good and common heifers. There are differences, too, all down the line, and if stockmen will analyze market reports of cattle, sheep and hogs they will observe many places where they are annually losing hundreds of

dollars by not fitting their offerings properly. A considerable effort has been made by the Dominion and Provincial Governments to get farmers to dock and castrate their ram lambs, but the effect of this is not discernible on the markets. The great majority of farmers do not perform these easy and simple operations, with the result that those selling lambs on the Montreal market are losing approximately one dollar per hundred on all the stuff they sell. The annual influx of bulls to the Montreal market also reveals the fact that in the districts contributing there is a slipshod and haphazard method of caring for and rearing live stock. Male calves are left entire, and the result is that a lot of scrub cattle are bred annually, and the bulls themselves command the lowest possible price when sold. Another point worth noting in the Montreal market report is that sows sell, as a rule, four dollars less than the lot they are shipped in. If they are shipped in a carload of hogs selling for twenty-one dollars, their value is seventeen dollars per hundred. If the same sows were shipped in a lot of hogs selling for nineteen dollars, their value would be fifteen dollars per hundred. It seems to be a policy in Eastern Ontario and Quebec to take one litter of pigs from a young sow and then dispose of her in the early summer or autumn, when the pigs are weaned, and save a sow from the spring litter from which to raise another litter of pigs the following spring. This means an annual deluge of sows on the market, small litters in the country, many casualties with young pigs, and poor returns all round.

We have the foundation laid in Canada for a splendid and remunerative live stock industry, but the men engaged in it could adopt better methods with monetary benefits to themselves and to the country as a whole.

## Better Fruit.

One who recognizes the value of the fruit industry to the agriculture of Eastern Canada cannot help but lament the comparatively poor quality of the crop that annually finds its way to market. While to some extent this is true of all fruit crops, it applies particularly to apples. Apples are by far the most important fruit crop we possess, and though apple growing is very extensively carried on in the East, the average quality of the crop in no way compares with the quality of the fruit that reaches our markets from British Columbia and the Northwestern States. The bulk of our apples are produced in farm orchards of small size, it is true, but even our larger commercial growers seemingly do not aspire to equal the product of their pacific coast competitors, and content themselves with fruit of only average quality. Whereas the barrel is unknown in the apple business of British Columbia, only a very little of our fruit finds its way into boxes. Consumers who would like Ontario boxed apples can rarely secure them.

The highest-priced fruit on our markets is not grown in the East. We are allowing our apple industry to merely drift along, and Eastern growers are apparently content to let their competitors take more and more of the cream of the market. Perhaps they have some advantages such as exist with regard to size and color, but on the other hand Ontario and the Annapolis Valley in Nova Scotia, for instance, possess advantages that should be better utilized. It is a fact that our Governments have not taken the lead as they should in this matter of fruit production, but growers cannot expect too much from Governments if they themselves are not keen to take advantage of opportunities. We need a campaign for better cultural methods. More study should be given to the questions of pruning, cultivation, fertilization and spraying so that the maximum results from our superior soil and climate for certain varieties could be secured. The farm orchard situation also deserves considerable attention, because one cannot help but feel that these thousands of farm orchards represent