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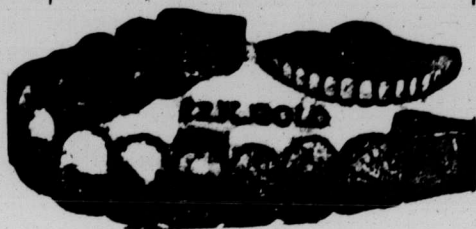
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# Alfalfa for Seed

The following is a communication received from J. E. Gustus, Calgary, which contains  
some valuable information in relation to the fodder crop which is so much  
before the public eye at the present time

"In the current issue of your valued  
periodical I note, under the caption,  
"Alfalfa Questions," a well-written letter  
from a subscriber at Glensouris in which  
the writer seems to feel that the matter  
of growing alfalfa for seed in this country  
has not been sufficiently touched upon by  
writers of alfalfa articles. Altho' E. J. T.  
has answered the enquirer's communica-  
tion quite fully, I trust I may be per-  
mitted to touch upon a few points brought  
out in the letter in question.

### Best Seed with Light Rainfall

With regard to growing alfalfa for seed,  
let me say this can no doubt be done  
profitably in this country, particularly  
in sections having less than fifteen inches  
of rainfall. It is well known that growing  
alfalfa seed is now a profitable industry,  
provided the seasons are favorable.  
Where two or more crops of alfalfa are  
produced each year, as is the case in  
Alberta, the second crop is the seed  
producer. The first crop is generally cut  
for hay, as it matures at a season when  
the plant does not set seed, owing to  
precipitation. The second crop matures  
during the latter part of August, at  
which time but little rain falls here, hence  
the plant will then set seed most readily.  
Bees and other insects play a very im-  
portant part in inducing the alfalfa to

do not think he is correct in assuming  
that the present price of alfalfa seed is so  
high that it requires the laying out of  
the price of the land to secure it. The  
price of alfalfa seed is governed by the  
law of supply and demand. With us  
the supply is as yet wholly inadequate  
to meet the demand, hence importations  
of seed will continue for a time at least.  
If we stop to consider the value of alfalfa  
and the fact that when once well estab-  
lished it will yield splendid crops of  
fodder during a number of years without  
reseeding (from six to ten years, possibly  
longer), I believe the current prices of  
seed are not exorbitant, at least the cost  
of the seed of a piece of land to alfalfa  
will not be more than if the same land  
were planted with grain, and the product  
will be much more valuable. With regard  
to growing alfalfa for seed, let me inform  
your correspondent that this is receiving  
experimental attention in Alberta, pos-  
sibly in several of the other provinces as  
well. In the vicinity of Medicine Hat  
a farm of 1,400 acres was planted with  
alfalfa for seed last year. The manager  
of this farm had previously produced  
more than 2,000 pounds of excellent  
alfalfa seed from about forty acres. In  
Southern Alberta, where thousands of  
acres are now growing luxuriant alfalfa,



Land Packers, Soil Enrichers, Weed Destroyers and Money Makers

set seed, and for this reason bee culture  
should be encouraged.

If your correspondent is correct in his  
suppositions that alfalfa will grow well,  
year after year, without bacterial inocu-  
lation, then the accumulated knowledge  
of science during the past thirty years  
touching this subject is all wrong. I am  
disposed to doubt the accuracy of your  
correspondent's conclusions when he  
states that his alfalfa is being grown  
without inoculation; on the other hand,  
it is my positive conviction that, some-  
how, nature has inoculated this land and  
that the bacteria promoting alfalfa  
growth are present in it. I am also of  
the opinion that a microscopic investiga-  
tion will reveal the presence of bacteria  
in the nodules on the roots of his alfalfa,  
which your correspondent seems to  
think as good as any other weed with-  
out them. The presence of nodules on  
the roots of alfalfa can not generally be  
discovered until the second year of its  
growth, and then only by carefully dig-  
ging away the earth surrounding the  
roots. The nodules may not be numer-  
ous the second year, but increase in num-  
ber year after year. If, in inoculating  
an alfalfa field with earth from another  
alfalfa field the scattering has been done  
unevenly, this fact will be noticed the  
first year. Where the inoculation is per-  
fectly done the alfalfa will be much  
more thrifty and of a dark green color,  
whereas if portions of the field have not  
been reached by the infested earth, as  
scattered, the plants growing without in-  
oculation are much less thrifty and of a  
light green color. In a year or two the  
population of the field will spread over  
the portions missed in scattering out the  
earth, and the whole field will be thrifty,  
provided, of course, the soil is of equal  
fertility over the entire field.

I quite agree with your correspondent  
regarding the durability of securing  
home grown seed when possible. But I

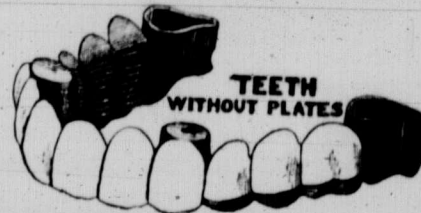
many of the growers are producing it for  
seed, and it is hoped that this phase of  
alfalfa culture may soon be brought to  
such success that our demands for hardy  
alfalfa seed may be met. But it must be  
remembered, however, that alfalfa seed  
growing with us is as yet in the experi-  
mental stage, also that during certain  
seasons the plant decides it will not set  
seed. I would therefore suggest that  
your correspondent plant ten acres of  
alfalfa for hay, and a small area for  
seed, the latter in rows about thirty  
inches apart. To insure success I would  
also advise that he inoculate the fields,  
either by soil-transference or by culture,  
planting on the richest soil he possesses,  
using the cleanest and best seed pro-  
curable, even tho' it may cost a little  
more money than he feels it is worth.  
If the plots are successful the cost of the  
seed is soon forgotten when he considers  
his valuable returns from hay and seed,  
provided the latter can be produced  
successfully in his district."

### CALGARY INDUSTRIAL EXHIBITION

All indications point to Calgary exhi-  
bition being this year the most success-  
ful ever held in the Western city. Last  
year the entries in all branches of live-  
stock were very large, but this year that  
record has been overstepped; there are  
391 more entries in the horse classes, 144  
more in the cattle classes, 115 more in  
the classes for swine, besides increases  
in all the other departments of the show.  
On account of the increasing popularity  
of this show the accommodation afforded  
by the present fair buildings is quite  
inadequate, and accordingly new plans  
have been prepared to provide for a  
complete, up-to-date exhibition ground.  
On June 26 a by-law was submitted  
to the people of Calgary relating to an  
appropriation for \$300,000 for the new  
buildings, and it is confidently expected  
that this by-law will be carried.



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