

THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE AND HOME MAGAZINE.

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DOMINION.

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by driving on the sides. What marvelous wisdom! As this clay makes the most abominable kind of mud, the following year's destruction and erosion will be still worse, and more rapid. This has gone on in many townships, until on some hillsides the roads have been worn out like railroad cuttings. The results, in a few generations, may be anticipated by the descriptions we read of ancient Chinese roads. It should be the purpose of earth-road maintenance to prevent such waste of good surface material.

It can be done very simply. Use the split-log drag early in spring and after every rain. Thus, the settling mud will be drawn back into the center before it has had a chance to reach the ditches. D. Ward King, of Missouri, by repeated dragging, crowned his road so high that he had to reverse the drag for a time. Some of our split-log-drag competitors graded comparatively flat pieces of road in one season quite nicely with the drag. The main object should be, however, to drag often and promptly enough to keep the crown shaped up, and prevent the need of grading. An ordinary earth road, properly dragged, will never require the road machine. Of course, one great benefit of dragging is that it keeps the road in the best possible condition during the season, instead of allowing it to lie in a rough, rutted condition till June, awaiting the annual grading. A dragged road will never get so muddy as an undragged one; it will dry sooner, be far smoother, and freer from dust. The benefits of dragging will be both temporary and lasting. It will keep the road oval, hard and smooth. Wonders may be accomplished with the split-log drag.

In a thin seeding of clover, the seedling plants which survive are often too few to be worth leaving. Liberal seeding increases the yield, and improves the quality of hay, reduces the number and area of open spaces for weeds to occupy, and goes far to guard against failure.

OUR MARITIME LETTER. THE PORK SITUATION.

There are some incomprehensible things in the commercial operations of the country. Indeed, to advert casually to the mystification which surrounds the rise and fall of agricultural markets, in the minds of farmers, is to believe that there are many such things. The great principle of supply and demand by no means solves all our difficulties as to prices. Full of prospect for the best that is in any one line of production to-day, to-morrow we can easily see the bottom completely out of the market, so far as it is concerned, and hope displaced by desperation. There appears to be no normal connection, for example, between the recent prices of pork offering for sale, the cost of production, the supply, or the demand. Pork has been just dull, awfully dull, and that is all about it.

Still, there is a serious side to the matter. The raising of pigs, not an overpopular occupation at any time, and one involving in our Maritime circumstances lots of hard work, is more than likely to get a setback which will take years to overcome. It was thus a few years ago, when the prices fell below the lowest possible paying figures; and just after a campaign in favor of selling on the hoof to factories, too, had resulted in booming the business considerably. It will be so now, unless the unexpected happens, when, on account of exceptional prices for several years, and the jump in grains, it seemed more certain than ever that there would be little difficulty in disposing of our hogs at almost any prices. Farmers are disgusted, and where disgust enters in, it takes a very strong counter-influence to shut out discouragement.

Here, in the Island, it has taken more to fatten a pig this season for market than usual. We have had plenty of grain, but our pork is not usually grain-fed. It is fed mainly on potatoes, like the Irish pork, and, like it, is superior to all the other grades on the market. Purely corn-fed stuff could never stand up against it. But we use some grain in finishing—millfeed, cracked oats or barley, mixed with the potatoes, which we always boil. Potatoes were a short crop with us this year, generally; the season was so wet and backward, and they were unable to store up the usual amount of starch. Grains in plenty we had, but rather soft in quality, from a like weather reason. Both products range unusually high in price, however. The short grain crop of the Continent, and the local demand for potatoes, are accountable for this. Whatever else wobbled then, pork-raisers were satisfied that there would be no decline, whatever raise, in that commodity. Imagine their surprise when, shortly after the fall market opened up, there was a most discouraging slump, and things continued to go from bad to worse. This is a mystery which an appeal to hard times or the decline of lumbering cannot satisfactorily explain.

When the crisis came in pork a few years ago, and the word with the farmer was, "Let us get out of the business," we attempted to stem the tide as best we could here, and offered the same advice pretty freely which we feel we must offer now. This is a country of mixed farming. It would be fatal to drop in disgust every article which the farm produces, because the prices are not what appear to us requisite to earn a living wage, not to speak of profit. We must make on one and lose on another often; sometimes make on all, sometimes even lose on all; but the average gives us the assurance of making our way. We must raise hogs for well-understood reasons. We have now reached an excellent type of hog in breeding; we have a market for our particular quality of hog; and, under general conditions, our roots are better fed to this sort of animal, and with better results than to any other. Then, there is much roughage about a mixed farm which is most economically fed to the pig. We therefore have to keep up the raising, in moderate numbers, at least, of pigs.

At Chicago, the other day, whilst passing through the stock-yards, we were more struck by the smallness of the porkers going through the slaughter-houses than anything else. Here they want a pig of at least 150 pounds. There we saw thousands slaughtered, not one of which would exceed 100 pounds; many would not reach 90 pounds. The difference between those small hogs and our larger ones was certainly in the condition. There is a demand for hams and bacon of small pigs, but those pigs must be in condition for killing. The fresh pork eaten to-day in the cities of the Continent is the produce of small hogs, but it has to be fatted just so to be purchased by the dealers. We have noticed that, whenever small pork is marketed at all in these Provinces, it is so thin and poor as to run the risk of being returned. There can be no doubt but that all that is really profitable in the raising of pork is put on the pigs when they are young; so, it should be a lesson to us all, even here in these small communities, where conditions

are against cheap production, to raise pigs which can be slaughtered at the earliest possible date consistent with economic feeding. The heavy mess pork never pays the producer. We have been doing too much of this sort of business here for many years. It is just possible that we will have to raise a class of porker which will weigh up to 150 pounds to satisfy our markets, but, by attending to his coming in the early spring, and letting him run to grass or green-grain growth, with a little concentrated feed of one sort or another, this weight limit may be reached before the cold weather comes, and the pork thus marketed at a profit.

In any case, we hope that our people will not go out of hog production, but, remembering the lessons of the past, manfully and hopefully await the readjustment of the markets, and keep up the supply in a moderate way, at least.

A. E. BURKE.

ECONOMICAL FARM MANAGEMENT.

Ever and anon we hear it claimed that farming does not pay, meaning that it does not yield standard city wages to those engaged in it, and current rates of interest on all the capital invested. Without pausing to expand the point that money-making is, after all, a poor ambition in life, or to dwell on the fact that farmers enjoy, without cash outlay, many privileges for which the city man pays a large share of his wages—if, indeed, he is able to obtain them at all—we pass on to admit that the above statement, so far as it goes, is probably true on the average, though it certainly is not true in all instances, and would be applicable in a great many fewer cases if we would only improve our methods as we might, make the most out of our farms, and live reasonably well up to the measure of our opportunities.

One splendid opportunity for true economy lies in seeding down rough, broken lands to permanent pasture, using the combination of grass and clover seeds recommended by Prof. Zavitz, and so often published in these columns. Another is in seeding down the less steep clay hillsides to alfalfa for soiling crop and hay, thereby converting them into the most profitable portions of the farm, growing a feed calculated to take the place largely of bran in the ration. Alfalfa is a wonderful plant, and, when once established, it thrives best and endures longest on hard clay hillsides, where other crops commonly are grown with much expense, indifferent yields, and little or no profit. Here the alfalfa finds surface and usually subsoil drainage (where the subsoil drainage is not good, as shown by water seeping to the surface, alfalfa should not be sown). Besides, it generally finds large quantities of the mineral elements of fertility, such as potash, phosphorus and lime. We have often observed alfalfa persisting on the brows of these clay hills many years after it had disappeared from the loamy knoll-tops, where the drainage appeared almost equally good. On mellow land, alfalfa is almost certain to be crowded out in course of time by grass, but on clay hillsides it holds its own indefinitely, withstanding successfully winter injury and the encroachment of grass.

Do not work rough land unless you are so unfortunate as to have none else on the farm. Set the more level and easily-cultivated portions aside for rotation, and hereon grow clover, corn, roots and grain. On the less-steep hillsides grow alfalfa, which has to be harvested, but seldom manured or reseeded. On the roughest land that is not in bush, lay down permanent pasture, and let the stock exercise itself by doing the harvesting. Such a policy as outlined will not only greatly economize labor, but increase annual profits and rapidly build up a farm.

MOTOR-CAR TAXATION IN BRITAIN.

Mr. H. H. Asquith, since become Premier of Great Britain, in replying to a recent deputation representing Provincial authorities on the subject of an Imperial grant towards the upkeep of roads, said he thought the facts and figures were such as to suggest that the time had come when the whole question should be considered, and he was quite prepared to give it very careful consideration. A very serious question was, whether the remedy, partial or complete, was to be found in the additional taxation of motor-cars, and if so, how the distribution of the sum raised in the different areas of the country should be determined.