

Doubts the Economy of Manure Spreaders.

Editor "The Farmer's Advocate":

The editorial in your issue of January 10th, entitled "What About the Manure Pile?" suggests a few thoughts on the old but ever-important subject of when and how we should dispose of the annual supply of barnyard manure that accumulates on almost every farm in this stock-raising country in the course of a year. What I have to say on this subject will probably not "go down" with some of your readers, more especially with those who have invested in a manure spreader. My opinion is that it does not pay the average farmer owning 100 acres to buy one of these machines, and I have several reasons for holding to this idea. In the first place, consider the initial cost. We will put it at, say, \$120, and assume that the life of the machine will be twelve years. This means an annual cost of \$6 a year for interest on the investment, and \$10 a year for wear and tear, making a total of \$16. Now, in the next place, in order to work the spreader to advantage, we must have three horses and at least two men. It is not always possible to utilize the time of the second man while the other is unloading, and as two good men will unload a wagon in about the same time as it can be done with a spreader, it follows that very little time is saved by the machine method.

But the great advantage claimed for the spreader is that it lays the manure on evenly—more evenly than can be done by hand. Now, I think this point has been greatly exaggerated. Any man who is accustomed to handling a dung-fork can spread a load of manure so that one square rod has just about as much as another, and if, after this has been done, he goes over the field with a spike-tooth harrow, I am not afraid to say that he will have a crop quite as good as if he had used a manure spreader. But the great disadvantage, as pointed out in your editorial, is that they cannot be used in the winter time. The agents, of course, claim that they can be used until the snow gets deep, but I venture to say that if they are drawn every day over several acres of plowed ground after the first hard frost, their life will come rather short of even the twelve years we have allowed them. Now, winter is the time to get the manure to the field. The barnyard is kept clear, time is saved, and if the spreading is done directly from the sleigh, the harrows can be got to work early in the spring, long before the frost would allow the large piles either in the yard or in the field to be touched. This is no small advantage, as the earlier the manure can be incorporated with the soil, the better for the succeeding crop. Taking everything into consideration, I cannot see where the profit comes in the buying of a manure spreader. I believe in a farmer investing in machinery when a saving of time and money is effected thereby, but as I figure it out, the spreader does neither. However, my figures may be subject to correction.

J. E. M.

Glengarry Co., Ont.

Praise from the Old Sod.

A reader in Ireland sends the following letter, which is flattering indeed to "The Farmer's Advocate," and gratifying to Canadian pride.

"Permit me to add my congratulations to those you have already received upon the issue of such a magnificent number as that bearing date of Dec. 13th, 1906. I am sure it was highly appreciated by your readers. I know, at any rate, that all here to whom I showed my copy were unstinted in the expressions of praise and admiration. The contents were truly varied and interesting, and the illustrations really capital. Let me take this opportunity of wishing 'The Farmer's Advocate' a career during 1907 of increasing prosperity, in which it may possess even greater interest and value than ever before for the farmers of the great Dominion."

Not an Unmixed Evil.

A Lambton correspondent writes: "In reply to your note at the foot of an article on tree-planting by J. H. Burns, in 'The Farmer's Advocate' of Jan. 17th, 1907, I would say there is very little danger of trees falling on people passing through the wood-lots in this section of the country, as we have game cards tacked up on the trees to warn all tramps from cities and towns with guns on their shoulders from trespassing in any way. However, if a few of them were killed off in that way, it would be small loss to the country."

The Hollow Brick Wall as an Insulator.

Editor "The Farmer's Advocate":

I regard the question, "Is the Basement Stable a Success," as the all-important one before the farming community to-day. I agree with all you say as to need of ventilation, the difficulty of obtaining same, the loss of heat by conduction, and your preference for losing the heat by convection rather than by conduction. In this connection, I want to say that there is no need of losing the heat in either way, and if a proper system of ventilation is installed, and proper material is used for building the wall, a dry, warm, pure atmosphere in the stable will be the result. I would like to say right here, in answer to J. E. M., Glengarry, that the concrete blocks are much more objectionable than either of the other building materials named, owing to the fact that they are so porous; water will go right through them, and they lose the heat by both conduction and convection.

I do not purpose discussing the subject of ventilation further than to say that many of the barns hereabout have a very inexpensive ventilating system that answers very well when a little attention is given to it, by having small openings in the wall at floor-line on each side of the barn, and the same number at the top of the wall, not directly over the ones at the floor. These are easily opened and closed, and, by noting the direction of the wind and giving a little care to it, good service is obtained.

As to wall material, I want to state that there is no way known to science to-day, no matter what material is used, whereby the cold air from outside can be so perfectly divided from the warm, damp air inside as by a wall having a dead-air space, and the more dead-air spaces the better. The basement made of wood, as you suggest, unless it has a dead-air space, is damp, no matter how tight it may be; make it of matched lumber if you like. I have seen the water dripping from such a wall, and have known them to rot out in a few years. The stone, concrete and solid-brick wall are the same, only a solid-brick wall is much preferable to the others. You may now say, What are we to do? Some ten years ago a few brickmakers started making a hollow clay block, 6 x 10 x 12, with three dead-air spaces in each running horizontally through the wall. These walls answer all the requirements of the case, are cheaper than stone, concrete or wood, and make a perfect insulation from heat and cold. In all the great number of buildings erected with them, not one, so far as I know, has been struck by lightning. I believe we have a wall that is an insulator from lightning as well. Professors Baker, of the Kingston School of Mines; Reynolds, O. A. C., Guelph, and Edward Orton, of the Technical School, Columbus University, Ohio, agree that, as air is a non-conductor, and there are so many dead-air spaces in these walls, we have a wall that is practically a non-conductor of lightning (burned clay, like porcelain itself, being a non-conductor). Could it be an accident that none of these buildings have been struck by lightning? I would refer your readers to a few out of many who have had experience with these walls in various parts of the Province. I think any of these parties would be pleased to answer questions or show their buildings to anyone: Milan Ecker, Binbrook, Ont., had barn 4 years; T. M. Putnam, Lyons, 9 years; Frank Kent, Aylmer, 4 years; Warren Barton, Derwent, 6 years; Benjamin Holthy, Belmont, 8 years; John Fulton, Union, 5 years; Geo. Walker, Quinn, 4 years.

Elgin Co., Ont.

W. McCREDIE.

[Note.—"The Farmer's Advocate" has very fully made known the merits of the hollow-brick wall claimed by many who have used them, but there is no use doing like the Democrats on election night, "Claim everything in the returns." If it be true that no barn resting on one of these walls was ever struck by lightning, then it was simply a coincidence. Of a half dozen insulating materials, such as air, glass, rubber, mica, paper, etc., the first named is the best non-conductor, but it has the least resistant quality against the electric current, or is the most easily disrupted; and, besides, portions of each brick are solid from top to bottom. If the barn were resting on glass posts, it would not insure it from being struck by lightning. The barn is a conspicuous object, and from it warm, moist currents of air are frequently rising, particularly when filled with new hay or grain, and in the presence of electrical storms is very liable to be struck.]

We should like now to hear from some who have barn walls or houses made of hollow cement blocks, as to their merits or demerits in regard to dryness, warmth, cost, and general utility.

Editor.]

THE DAIRY.

The Dairy-herd Competition.

As explained in our report of the Dairymen's Convention at London, the directors of the Western Ontario Dairymen's Association last summer offered a prize for a dairy-herd competition, the award going to the patrons who received, during the seven months of the season, the largest certified return in money from a cheese factory or creamery. Fourteen patrons of cheese factories and one creamery patron entered, but two of these failed to send in statements. The prize was won by M. T. Haley, of Springford, Ont., whose herd of 11 Holsteins gave, in the seven months from April 1st to October 31st, an average of 6,512 pounds of milk per cow, netting \$62.50. A complete statement of the results appeared in "The Farmer's Advocate" of January 24th, also a report of the address of Mr. Haley, who told how he handled his herd. We at once wrote to the remaining contestants, and several of their letters appear this week.

Breed, Feed, and Comfort.

Editor "The Farmer's Advocate":

In reply to your letter enquiring as to how my herd was handled that was entered in the dairy-herd competition, under the auspices of the Western Dairymen's Association, I may say that my stable has stall space for 33 head, with V-shaped water trough over manger the whole length; width of stable, 30 feet; length, 150 feet. Cows stand in one row. The cows are 12 pure-bred and 12 grade Holsteins.

We have always tried to feed liberally. In the fall, as soon as the weather gets cold, the cows are put in stable, and stay there until the first of May. I have a silo that holds about eight acres of good corn, and we feed about one-third silage, one-third cut straw and one-third hay, with about four pounds of meal to each. The feed is mixed twice a day, and give one and one-half bushels to each cow. We cannot lay down any fixed rule, as cows seem to need some variety, and some can eat and digest more than others. In summer we try to have some meal to put into mangers each time we milk, as this brings the cows home, and we do not need the dog. The reasons our cows have done good work are: (1) Good breed; (2) good feed; (3) solid comfort for 365 days every year. We have almost every year bought bran and shorts to supplement the barley and oats grown at home. Last year I fed over \$200 worth of mill feed, besides over 1,000 bushels of barley and oats. Liberal feeding and gentle handling are all-important.

North Oxford, Ont. REUBEN GLEASON.

A Small Herd Well Cared For.

In answer to your letter of the 17th inst., I will gladly give you what information I can in regard to the management of my herd of cows entered last summer in the dairy-herd competition. My barn is 32 x 56, with a straw barn 20 x 30. The cows are grade Holsteins and Shorthorns. Their yield of milk was 47,461 pounds, making an average for eight cows of 5,933 pounds, and received \$148.60, making \$56.07 for each cow. This is clear of all drawing or making expenses.

I have used mostly barley and oat chop to keep up the milk flow when the grass got too dry, and also fed green peas and oats mixed, and then corn as soon as it was mature enough, as I think corn is poor feed if too soft.

In winter I feed mostly corn and hay and barley and oat chop when my cows are milking, but when the cows are dry I just feed whatever kind of rough feed I have.

I do not weigh the milk, as it takes too much time when we are busy.

I think that the main reason for my cows doing well is that the herd is small, so we do all our own work, do not have to depend too much on hired help, and milk regularly; also the fact that the Beachville factory is one of the best-paying factories in Ontario.

I will give you a statement for the balance of the year—that is, after the first of November, as the contest finished at that time. I had two more cows that I bought about the 15th of November, fresh calved. I sent 11,913 pounds of milk, for which I received \$128.72, making a total of \$577.32 received from April 1st to Dec. 31st, 1906.

South Oxford, Ont.

ROBT. BOWIE.

Information Always Seasonable.

We very much appreciate "The Farmer's Advocate." It is eagerly looked for each week by every member of our family. Your articles are always timely and in season, just when we can make some practical use of them. A great deal of the matter contained in your paper has been very helpful to us in our everyday work on the farm. Wishing the "Advocate" more success still.

Oxford Co., Ont.

WM. AMOS.