

Grain---Clover---Corn---Steers.

"If an ex-student of the Ontario Agricultural College does not make a success of farming it is his own fault and not the fault of the teaching which he received at the institution", said J. B. Muir, of Bruce County, recently, when in conversation with a representative of "The Farmer's Advocate," and the truth of the above statement is evidenced by the success which Mr. Muir has attained on his 200-acre farm. This acreage was not obtained all at once, as Mr. Muir commenced at the bottom of the ladder where the majority of farm boys are forced to commence. But the principles taught during the time spent at the O.A.C. have enabled him to farm efficiently. Mr. Muir is the medallist of his year, and returned to his farm determined to prove to doubting Thomases that an agricultural education could be capitalized on the farm, as well as in any other business. Rather than go into pure-breds, Mr. Muir handled commercial cattle such as anyone in ordinary circumstances might purchase. After thirty years, the farm is cleared of debt, there is a comfortable home with every city convenience, and, we understand, a neat income from investments. Every cent of it was made off the land. A short resume of Mr. Muir's methods of farming may be a guide to many already on farms, or contemplating taking up land.

The main object from the start was to grow the largest crops available, and in order to do this it was found necessary and profitable to keep a large number of cattle, through which to market the crops and to supply fertility to the soil. Grade Shorthorn cows of high quality are kept, and, in addition to their progeny, two carloads of steers are purchased practically every fall. This winter is an exception, as, owing to light crops last year, the number of cattle being fattened is but twenty-five. Seed oats and clover seed are two other specialties with this successful farmer.

The 200-acre farm is divided into two sections, and a three-year rotation worked on each. The one part is devoted to fall wheat, pasture and summer fallow, the other part to oats, red clover, and hoed crops. From twenty to twenty-five acres of fall wheat are sown on summer fallow each year. This is seeded for pasture the following year, and, by the way, there is about forty acres of permanent pasture in the farm, as well as the acreage seeded each year. It has been found profitable to summer fallow for wheat. Land is plowed in the fall, and during the winter what manure is available after the hoed crop is taken care of is spread on this land. During the summer the cultivator and harrows are the implements used. The land is not plowed. Any thistles, or other weeds, which escape the cultivator teeth are cut out with the hoe. In this way the farm has been cleaned and there are comparatively few thistles to cut in an ordinary season. The wheat is a cash crop.

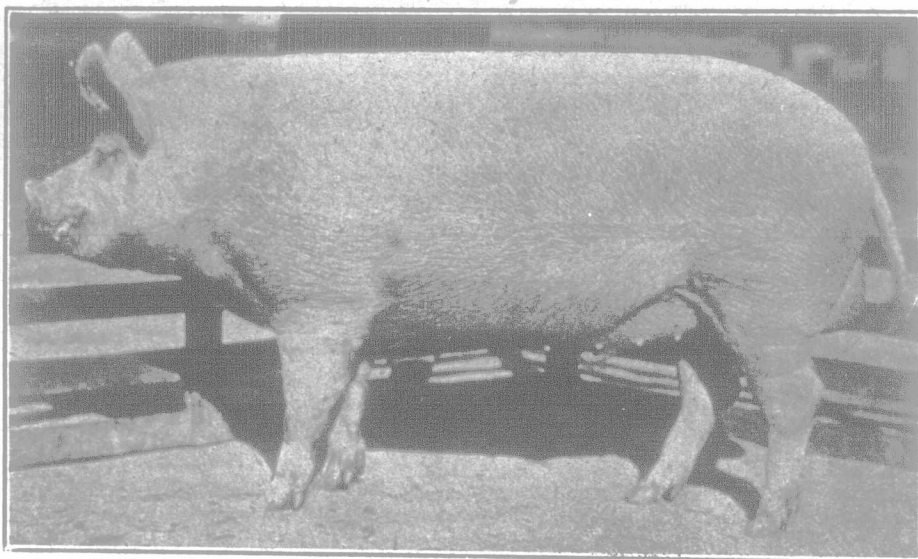
The other part of the farm, which is devoted to oats, hoed crop and clover, gives a good revenue. No other grain is sown on this section of the farm which makes it easy to keep the variety pure. The oats follow the hoed crop, and are seeded with about ten pounds of red clover to the acre. The next year the clover is cut for hay around the last week in June, and then a crop of clover seed is taken off in the fall. The sod is plowed and manured during the winter for corn. A number of years ago a quantity of oats were hand-picked and seed has been saved from them for the past years. Oats are sold for seed at a slight margin over the market price, and the returns are used to purchase oil cake for feeding cattle. A big revenue is secured from red clover. An endeavor has been made to free the fields from weeds common in the red clover seed. Such plants as buckhorn, cockle, etc., have practically been banished from the farm. It required considerable effort for a few years after the farm was purchased, but by sowing the home-grown seed year after year and roughing the fields in the fall and during the summer the troublesome plants have been gotten rid of. No special machinery is used for harvesting the clover for seed. When the straw is short a table is used on the cutting-bar and the clover raked off in bunches. When the straw is long it is cut like ordinary hay, but an effort is made to do the cutting when the dew is on. It is threshed with the clover huller and cleaned on the farm ready for market. Mr. Muir is always watching for weeds about the farm, and it is with difficulty that a pernicious plant gets established. The summer-fallow, hoed crop, and roughing the fields, do not give the weeds a chance to get a start.

Mr. Muir is an expert cattle feeder, and is able to ship out market-toppers nearly every spring. He buys most of his cattle during the fall and lifts them at time of stabling. He likes to get good, heavy two-year-old

cattle. The heavier they are the greater the indication of their thriftiness; the bigger the steer, the better the gains during the winter, as a rule. The more meat there is on these bullocks the better. Good grade Shorthorn or Hereford steers are preferred, and the bunch in the stable this winter averaged 1,203 pounds when they were stabled, early in November. By spring these will make from 250 to 300 pounds gain.

It was a little after ten in the morning when we walked into the stable, and every animal was lying down, apparently perfectly contented with life. It wasn't because their mangers were filled with sweet clover hay, because on looking in the manger we found that, except for a handful of straw in some they were as clean as a plate. It rather surprised us to see the cattle so satisfied, and not one of them attempted to rise when we entered the stable. Mr. Muir's success in feeding is attributed largely to his ability to so study each individual under his care that the cattle fill with the roughage but there is nothing left over. On forcing the cattle to rise, in order that we might have an opportunity of observing their size and quality, we noticed that every one was as full as a tick. We have been in other herds where the mangers contained quite a bit of feed, but yet the animals had more or less of a gaunt appearance. Very little grain is fed to the steers; in fact, they were only getting a pound and a half, twice a day, at the time of our visit. Towards the end of the feeding period the amount of grain is slightly increased. Oats are the only concentrate fed so far this winter. While there is an order in for oil cake, it has not yet arrived. It is usually planned to feed oil cake, as it is believed that its use enables the animals to get more out of the other feeds, due partially to the balancing of the ration.

There are two big silos filled with corn, and silage and straw form the basis of the ration. Equal bulk



Oak Lodge Cid.

Champion Yorkshire boar, London, 1919, for J. Brethour & Nephews, Burford, Ont.

of these two feeds is mixed, and the animals get in the neighborhood of 45 to 50 pounds per day. In addition, they get from six to ten pounds of roots. As Mr. Muir does the feeding himself, he is in a position to make a study of each animal. If any silage is left in the manger, less is fed at the next meal. If the manger is particularly clean, a little more than usual is fed. Considerable difference is found in the appetites and capacity of the different individuals. This feed so satisfies the steers, that, after finishing the morning meal, they lie in perfect contentment until the next feeding time, which is about 4:30 in the afternoon. No hay has been fed so far this winter, but a little will be given after the beginning of next month. The animals were the picture of health. To see the glossiness of their hair, and their thrifty appearance one would think they were grass cattle. Mr. Muir attributes the healthiness of his herd to the fact that their stomachs are not burned out with grain. If the animals do not fill on the roughage, the grain is withheld. On the other hand, the amount of grain varies, especially towards the finishing period, so that an animal gets all he will take without interfering with his appetite for the silage and straw. It is believed that a good many feeders injure their cattle in the fall by giving too much grain. Grass is nature's feed for bovines, and the nearer the winter ration can be brought to summer conditions the better the animals will do. Grain is of a heating nature and too much of it tends to impair digestion. One should be very careful when starting to feed in the fall to see that the animals get plenty of succulent feed and to start them on grain very carefully. If the stock appears as satisfied on the winter ration as on summer pasture, one may rest assured that they are doing well.

When picking the feeders in the fall, Mr. Muir likes to get a straight, deep, thick, blocky bullock, with a thrifty hide and bright eyes. The more growthy they are the better, and if they are in fair flesh they are in a better position to go ahead than if a little thin. It is not always possible to get the ideal steer for feeding purposes, but Mr. Muir is willing to pay a premium to get the quality.

This system of farming—grain, clover, corn and steers—has worked well in Mr. Muir's case. It is a straight commercial proposition, and while every farm will not produce seed grain or clover seed, every farm will produce some kind of grain, and most of them will grow silage corn. These feeds, properly fed to the right quality steers, may be marketed at remunerative prices. The same feeds give good returns when fed to cows or young cattle. The manure has a considerable value in keeping up the soil fertility.

Mr. Muir graduated from Guelph in 1885, having won the Governor-General's medal in his final year. He had an opportunity to go into professional agriculture, but he preferred practical farming. Although many have said that book learning was of no use to the practical farmer, Mr. Muir had faith in the farm and believed he could use to good advantage the knowledge and training he had received at Guelph. He said the information gained has enabled him to make a success of farming, financially, and has given him a greater enjoyment of life, due to the fact that he knew the why and wherefore of the various operations of farming. By understanding the nature of plant growth, chemical action in the soil, the scientific side of feeding, etc., the farmer is permitted to take more satisfaction from doing his work, and Mr. Muir advises anyone who wants to farm to take agricultural training.

THE FARM.

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Experiences With Sweet Clover.

EDITOR "THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE":

I noticed an article in "The Farmer's Advocate" of January 8, re sweet clover growing. Now, I think A. G. W.'s letter is misleading to anyone intending to grow sweet clover. He says it won't pay to grow it on clay or sandy loam. I had good sweet clover last summer on heavy clay land, and I have seen it grow on a clay hill where nothing else would grow, and I can show A. G. W. sweet clover growing five feet high on sandy land known as the pine plains, a short way from Camp Borden, where the sand will drift like snow. A. G. W. says it would be the height of folly to sow it on unlimed sandy soil. The above-mentioned soil has never had lime applied to it. He also says not to sow it with the husks on. It makes no difference for the husks being on as to its growth, as it will reseed itself, and when it shells out in the field the husks are certainly on the seed. You will also notice that A. G. W. says it will not grow on wet land, and then he says the reason sweet clover grows in some wet corners of your fields is that the soil has become inoculated and is richer. I suppose it will grow on wet land as long as the wet lands in the corner of the field. Sweet clover will grow where any other clovers will grow, and in places where other clovers won't grow.

Simcoe Co., Ontario.

E. A. LETTS.

The Seed Oats Situation.

EDITOR "THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE":

In those districts where the oat crop was a partial or total failure last season, farmers are becoming somewhat anxious as to the available supply of seed oats. There is a general tendency on the part of farmers who have seed oats for sale to withhold them until later in the winter. The movement of seed oats is delayed also, because transportation has been needed for coal, feed and lives stock.

Possibly 400,000 bushels of seed oats may be required in Ontario and Quebec, and a much larger quantity in Southern Alberta and Saskatchewan. The Canadian Government Seed Purchasing Commission already has substantial supplies in store in the Interior Terminal Elevators, and large quantities of good-quality early-harvested oats are still to come forward. Alberta and Saskatchewan requirements will be given first consideration from the seed oats produced in these provinces.

The shortage in Ontario and Quebec may quite easily be met from the large and excellent oat crops in Prince Edward Island and Eastern Nova Scotia. No. 1 quality Island Banner seed oats are now being delivered as far west as Toronto at a price comparable with western seed oats of the same grade. The price of No. 1 seed oats delivered in bulk car lots at any point in Ontario and Quebec should not exceed the current Fort William cash price for No. 2 Canada Western