

THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE

AND HOME MAGAZINE

* AGRICULTURE, STOCK, DAIRY, POULTRY, HORTICULTURE, VETERINARY, HOME CIRCLE. *

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The Farmers' School.

One of the up-to-date local papers of the Province takes up the question of an agricultural college under the above very appropriate heading. The questions are raised whether the results would warrant the expenditure, whether there are not now too many schools, and also the opinion is stated that the institution of such a college would mean situations for a few more professors and teachers—of course, government proteges. Situated as the editor of the Hartney Star is, in a district peopled with large farmers, some of whom have made money out of wheat and the judicious investment of moneys brought to the Province by them, and peopled also by men who have been debarred an agricultural college training and yet made money, his attitude is the same as that taken by the down-east farmer of twenty years ago, and now taken by many of the farmers on the as yet unexhausted farms of Manitoba. It is not reasonable to suppose that any person will enthuse over a subject of which he or she may be uninformed, which lack of knowledge may be due to accident or design. On the other hand, before any statements are made for or against a farmers' school, the pros and cons should be carefully studied. It is a far cry from the farming of Horace Greeley to that of this year of grace, 1901, and probably in no profession have such strides been made as in the agricultural one. Owing to the fact that agricultural colleges are comparatively recent, the statement that the experience of the past shows that the most successful farmers in the country are not those men who were taught in schools is not founded on fact, but is a hackneyed expression which somehow seems to have obtained credence through repeated iteration. The fact that the breeders' associations and several farmers' institutes, and the enlightened members of the press have already spoken in favor of a college is some evidence at least that the really practical men believe in it. Interview many of the successful men and it will be found that they lament the lack of such colleges in their early days, stating that could they have had instruction in stock judging, it would have meant thousands of dollars to them. The beauty of an agricultural college is that it instructs its students to test theories before adopting them as the basis of practice. Practically the bulk of the advancement made in dairying has been made right in the agricultural colleges. It certainly seems strange that an avowed friend of the farmers should not stand up stoutly for, as that friend puts it, "The Farmers' School." In previous issues we have outlined the work given and the benefits derived at an agricultural college. The Babcock test, the discovery of remedies for smut in wheat and oats, the breeding of new varieties of grains, the analysis of commercial fertilizers, the exposure of such fakes as aquatic separators, the bringing to the country of the rape plant, etc., have in each and every instance repaid the investment of a state or province in agricultural colleges and experiment stations a thousandfold. Right in our contemporary's district is an agricultural college student who is by no means a failure as a farmer. It is not assumed by us that an agricultural college can infuse into a man those essential qualities—energy and observation. In these days of migration toward farmers' children, it certainly behooves us to find first the cause and then a remedy. It is well known that colleges in plenty exist in Manitoba for fitting men and women for the learned professions, and as there is no reason why a farmer's child should not have as good an education

as the townsman's child, the country boy or girl attends the only colleges available, and is, in nine cases out of ten, forever after lost to the profession of agriculture. Having had the advantage of an agricultural college training, and the desire to see the results of such a course on the majority of those taking it, we can unhesitatingly affirm that the course has proven of incalculable benefit to those taking it. It is well known that college graduates are much preferred in the dairy business; in fact, it is not very ancient history that New Zealand took several good men from Canada to push the dairy industry in that country. The Americans, with their characteristic foresight, have repeatedly done likewise, and have made drafts on the O. A. C., Guelph; our cousins to the south don't do business for fun, and they have made money out of the transaction. To-day the cheese, butter, and beef of the U. S. bids fair to oust us from the premier position on the British market, a position hard to get, and harder to retain. Of course, if farming is to consist only of wheat-growing, possibly an agricultural college training might not pay as big dividends. When such men as Swift, of Chicago, and Vanderbilt employ agricultural college graduates to run their farms, bring out their show herds at fairs, or buy beef cattle on the Chicago market, for which work big salaries are paid, it seems that the instruction given at the agricultural college should be of use to even the average farmer. At many of the fairs to-day stockmen can be met who are anxious to get such a course for their children, and who realize that the properly manned and run agricultural college does not turn out theorists, but practical men.

The Marketing of Farm Products.

The farmer frequently has tendered to him advice as to when to sell his products, such advice being given by people not altogether disinterested, as those parties are, in some cases, the farmer's creditors. There can be no question as to how those products should be marketed—namely, in the best possible shape. With dairy products we know that appearance of the package counts for a great deal; in eggs and poultry the appearance of the products themselves make for or against the sale. Dairy butter, as has been so often stated, should be put on the market in brick form or in tubs, the butter being nicely encased in heavyweight parchment paper. Eggs are not attractive to a buyer if dirty or cracked, and care should be taken that such do not get into a shipment. When we come to meat products in the form of the steer, the hog or the wether, it is essential, in order to obtain the top price, which is also the profitable price, that those animals be fitted to the top notch; half-fat stuff does not sell well. When we come to horse sales it is money in the seller's pocket to have the horse fat and free from blemishes, well broken to halter and good to show off its paces. Grain always sells better if free from smut or mouldiness, and if free from small grains or weed seeds. Even in the marketing of potatoes or vegetables or fruit, it pays to have the article offered for sale even in size, and sound; in fact, sorting is a very profitable operation applied even to live stock. On such big live-stock markets as Chicago or Kansas City, men make their living by buying carloads of live stock as it comes into the yards, sorting them up and then selling to the packing houses. It is well known to most shippers how a few old sows or stags will depreciate the value of an otherwise good lot of hogs. The same thing applies in cattle ship-

ments: a few bulls and cows in calf invariably means a lower bid than would have been obtained had the stock mentioned been culled out. When dealing in pure-bred stock, the same applies. It is poor policy to run a visitor through a stable or barn where all ages and sizes are congregated together. Sorting into lots of similar ages and sizes has a good effect on the buyer, which reacts to the benefit of the vendor. The question of dishonesty in marketing need not enter into the discussion, as there is only one opinion, and that is that "Honesty is the best policy." As to whether it pays to hold products for a considerable time after their production, opinion differs greatly. As production is continually going on, the holder of produce is increasing the competition in most cases for himself, besides risking deterioration in his own products, added to which loss must be the cost of insurance, the cost of interest on moneys borrowed or interest lost on the money tied up in the held products, so that, speaking broadly, we can say that as a rule it pays to market soon after a product is ready, in place of holding for problematical advances.

Farm Siftings.

The Eastern visitor is with the farmer just now, and in some cases might better have stayed east. The hold-up style of hiring don't go here: \$40 a month is the limit a farmer can pay a harvest hand and expect to make anything out of the transaction. However, there are lots of very useful fellows who came up, and it will be in order to persuade them to stay here. Hire by the year, if you can't do it any other way.

Lots of new threshing outfits are going to the field just now. In view of that fact, though, it will not pay to try and get your threshing done at less than a reasonable price. If there is one thing more than another some farmers should learn, it is that nine times out of ten haggling over prices with business men never pays. Insist on good work and be prepared to pay accordingly.

The long evenings are fast approaching when leisure time for reading will be had. Provide for that time by having a good lamp for the table, one with a large burner. The cost is a mere trifle, and the saving to your eyes as you read aloud to the goodwife sewing will a hundred times repay the cost of such a lamp. It is said, "Let thy light so shine, etc."—well, it can't very well through a foul burner or dirty lamp chimney.

It will soon be time to think of marketing your products, more particularly the wheat. Advice is often tendered we farmers on that point as to when to sell. When in town, recently, a merchant said, "The farmer who sells at the opening of the market as a rule comes out the best." Then, as if on second thought, said, "Let the farmer sell, straighten up his accounts, and then if he wants to speculate, buy Chicago wheat." Isn't the last piece of advice a little dangerous?

One of the farmers' \$1-a-year advisers thinks Manitobans are not ready for an agricultural college, suggests that we mark time—during which our wide-awake brethren to the south, with their fine agricultural colleges and their better product, students, will oust us from the world's markets. Oh, yes, sit down and pray, but don't move a finger.

The demand for weigh scales seems to be increasing; several neighbors have purchased this year. The elevator weighman will need to look out. Results will be better, too, if the fanning mill is used. The farmer, if docked for small stuff in his load, should surely get the small wheat. If the buyer insists on docking you, insist on getting back the dockage. It makes good

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