

What Farmers Ask

Fall or Spring Plowing?

Q.—I would like to know your opinion on plowing this fall. Our land is very dry. Do you consider it harms the land to plow it when it is so dry? If we put the land in good shape this fall, plow it and use the sub-soiler and drag it in good shape and get moisture this winter or before the crop is sown in the spring, do you consider the land is in better shape than it would be to plow it in the spring?

Nokomis, Sask.

—G.S.

A.—From experience in Manitoba and from results of experiments in regard to stubble treatment at the Indian Head station, it is believed that better results are obtained where the stubble is fall plowed and packed with a sub-surface packer immediately after the plow and then harrowed. This seems to open up the soil sufficiently to allow it to receive all the moisture that may fall in the form of fall and spring rains and also the thawing of the snow in spring. The subsoil packer firms this down so that the air is not allowed to circulate too freely and pick up the moisture from the subsoil. The harrowing of the surface forms a mulch and prevents evaporation. Then, of course, there is always the advantage that the land is practically ready for sowing in the spring, and in this manner the crop can be put in much earlier.

Information Concerning Grain Crops

Q.—Will you kindly send to the writer any pamphlets which you might have that would give information as to the raising of wheat and oats; also as to summer fallowing and the relative merits of spring and fall plowing.

Saskatoon, Sask.

—W.R.

A.—Write for the following bulletins to the Publications Branch, Department of Agriculture, Ottawa, "Preparing the Land for Grain Crops," "Results of our Field Husbandry and Cereal Tests," and the last printed report. In the latter bulletin if you will look up the report of the Indian Head station on cereals and field husbandry you will find what has been learned in regard to these crops and the different methods of cultivation at Indian Head.

In brief, Mr. Harrison, the superintendent, states that in this district it has been found that the Marquis wheat gives best results. It is from a week to ten days earlier than Red Fife and yields higher both on summerfallow and stubble land. This is sown a bushel and a half per acre, the seed being first treated with formalin by sprinkling with a solution of one pound of formalin to 35 gallons of water. The seed should be sown as soon as possible in the spring.

The Banner Oats are proving to be one of the best that have been tried. They will give best results on summer-fallow, but will give a paying crop on stubble land if it is spring plowed. They should be sown about two bushels per acre, and it is advisable to treat them with formalin the same as wheat. The seeding should be done not too early in the spring, as they are rather susceptible to frost.

It has been found that if successful crops are to be grown in this district it is necessary to summer-fallow every third year, thus storing up three years' moisture for two years' crop. Considering the labor necessary, the amount of moisture stored and the weeds controlled, the following method of summer-fallowing is proving to be most satisfactory: Disc the land in the fall as early as possible after harvest. Next season plow the land early in June at least 6 inches deep, pack and harrow at once and cultivate then as necessary to keep down the weeds and form a mulch.

In stubble treatment, fall plowing, if it is done at the right time and well cultivated afterwards, will possibly give as good a yield as other preparations. The plowing should be done as early in the fall as possible and followed immediately after with a packer and harrow. Where this cannot be done the land should be spring plowed or the

stubble burned off, disced and seeded. Land treated in this way can be sown to wheat. If oats are to be sown, better results will be obtained on spring plowing.

Winter Wheat and Rye

Wish you would advise us what success or failure has been had in Saskatchewan raising winter wheat and rye. If a success, would be glad to have full particulars of how and when to do it for best results.

Iowa, U.S.A.

INQUIRER.

Winter wheat has never proved sufficiently hardy for any district in Saskatchewan. On the station farm we always sow a small plot, but this invariably kills out badly during the winter and early spring, and it is well sheltered by windbreaks and hedges, so that on the average farm it would prove even more disappointing.

Winter rye, on the other hand, is proving well adapted to our conditions. It has been grown at this station for a number of years and has given good average yields each season. Last year the yield was about 37 bushels and 40 pounds per acre. Best results are obtained by sowing the seed on land which has been summerfallowed until about the first week in September when the rye should be sown. The seed should be sown with an ordinary grain drill, putting on about from a bushel to a bushel and a half per acre. It will not require any further attention then until it is ripe, which will usually be some time between July 20 and August 1, when it can be handled similar to any other grain crop. Due to the fact that it is harvested so early it can be used to good advantage in combatting wild oats. If the field is well worked as summerfallow until the first week in September the oats will be kept in control for that season and oats coming up after that in the fall will be killed off by the frost. The next season oats that start will be cut with the rye before they are perfectly matured, and in this way we really get two years in which we are combatting this pest. It should never be sown on a field that is badly infested with stink weed or any of the winter annuals, as it encourages their growth.

Pepper Grass

This weed received is commonly known as pepper grass. It is an annual or winter annual. Where it acts as a winter annual it will do considerable damage to the crop by crowding out the plants. Good fall or early spring cultivation will kill these plants and little trouble will then be experienced with them. This cultivation should be given them with a disc, plow, or duck-foot cultivator. The pepper grass is becoming quite prevalent in the West, especially in districts where timothy seed is sown. The seed of this weed is very similar in size and color to the hulled timothy seed, and consequently is often found as an impurity in this seed.

To Eradicate Poverty Weed

Q.—Would you kindly inform me of the best method to get rid of "Poverty weed"? The prairie contained same before it was broken and since then the weed seems to thrive better the more cultivation it gets. Summer-fallowing plowed deep in May is growing up with it anywhere it was before it was turned down, in spite of good cultivation.

Wiseton, Sask.

—S.A.

A.—The only method of successfully combatting this weed is by a thorough system of summer-fallowing. Follow closely the following outline: Plow the land six inches deep in May or the early part of June, and cultivate with a duck-foot cultivator from time to time to keep the land perfectly black. If this system is followed, all the weeds will be killed out.

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